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To Professor William Arndt, Ph. D., D. D.

The Editorial Committee of the CONCORDIA THEOLOGICAL MONTHLY herewith expresses its regret in losing Dr. William Arndt from its staff. He has been associated in various capacities with this journal and its predecessor for twenty-five years. In recent years he has been the managing editor. Dr. Arndt has accepted the assignment to direct the American edition of the *Preuschen-Bauer Greek Lexicon of the New Testament*, a noteworthy project undertaken in conjunction with the University of Chicago Press. Among the tasks which Dr. Arndt had to relinquish in order to clear this assignment is the managing editorship of the CONCORDIA THEOLOGICAL MONTHLY. The Committee herewith extends heartfelt gratitude to Dr. Arndt for his past labors for this journal and its best wishes for successful completion of the new project in particular and further years of blessed service to the Church in general.

In the arrangements incident to Dr. Arndt's departure from the Committee, the faculty of Concordia Seminary has made the following provisions for the editing of the CONCORDIA THEOLOGICAL MONTHLY: Professor Frederick E. Mayer, D. D., will be managing editor, in special charge of the feature articles. Professor Theodore Hoyer, D. D., takes charge of the department entitled Miscellanea. Professor Paul M. Bretscher, Ph. D., enters the Committee as special editor of the Theological Observer. President Louis J. Sieck, D. D., will continue to be in charge of the book reviews, and a new program is planned by which faculty departments will more adequately cover the current literature. Professor R. R. Caemmerer, Ph. D., will be in charge of the homiletical section. These members of the Committee constitute a coverage of the departments of the theological seminary and will together plan a sufficiently diversified table of contents. Several members of the faculty in addition will continue to render much-appreciated assistance: Professor J. T. Mueller, Ph. D., Th. D., for the Theological Observer, and Professor Alex Wm. C. Guebert in editing the Religious News Service.

Notes on Luther's Interpretation of John 6:47-58

By JOHN THEODORE MUELLER

Christ's discourse in John 6:47-58 is no doubt one of the most striking and challenging appeals from the lips of our Savior that are recorded in the Four Gospels.

It constitutes the climax in a long and earnest address delivered by our Lord when His Jewish followers, impressed by the amazing miracle of the feeding of more than five thousand in the wilderness with five loaves and two fishes, came to Capernaum to take Him by force and make Him their King, not indeed because they believed in Him as the promised Messiah, but, as Jesus frankly told them, "Because ye did eat of the loaves and were filled" (v. 26).

The Jewish multitude desired "meat that perisheth" (v. 27), meat for the body, earthly blessings. So Christ rebuked their secularistic, materialistic spirit and exhorted them to accept Him as their spiritual Savior.

Accordingly, in John 6, Jesus inculcates faith in His divine person and work as the prerequisite of salvation. Everything He here does and says centers in the necessity of faith for obtaining eternal life. This paramount emphasis on faith is apparent from His words, stressed and re-stressed in the whole chapter: "Believe on Me"; as, for example: "This is the work of God that ye *believe* on Him whom He hath sent" (v. 29); again: "He that *believeth* on Me shall never thirst" (v. 35); or: "This is the will of Him that sent Me, that everyone which seeth the Son and *believeth* on Him may have everlasting life" (v. 40); and: "Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that *believeth* on Me hath everlasting life" (v. 47). When at last the unbelieving Jews had turned away from Jesus, and He had asked His disciples whether they, too, wanted to leave Him, He expressed His hearty approval of Peter's inspired whole-hearted confession of faith: "We *believe* and are sure that Thou art that Christ, the Son of the Living God" (v. 69). Peter's unqualified *credo* was the result of his being chosen by Christ (v. 10). In Peter and his ten fellow disciples God's election and calling were realized to His glory.

So, then, the entire discourse of Christ in John 6 is an

ardent plea for faith in Him as the only Savior of sinners. Faith in the Redeemer, as the absolute *necessarium* of salvation, is the keynote enabling us properly to understand this great chapter.

In a general way this fact has been readily admitted by exegetes of all times and denominations. Nevertheless, there remains the age-old dispute concerning the proper interpretation of John 6:47-58. Roman Catholics have commonly interpreted the words eucharistically, that is to say, they have referred them to the Lord's Supper and based upon them (as also upon others) their special doctrine of transubstantiation. Most Reformed theologians have correctly interpreted the passage figuratively as demanding faith in Christ; but on the basis of these words they have denied the real presence of Christ's body and blood in the Lord's Supper.

Luther, on the one hand, rejected the eucharistic interpretation of the words; yet, on the other hand, he acknowledged in them a fundamental truth that must be heeded by those desiring to receive the Holy Supper worthily. It is around these two vital thoughts, which by no means are contradictory, though they are often confused, that we wish to group our notes in this article.

I

LUTHER REJECTS THE EUCHARISTIC INTERPRETATION OF THE PASSAGE

1

As is well known, Luther consistently rejected the eucharistic interpretation of John 6:47-58. This important fact Dr. W. H. T. Dau, professor of Doctrinal Theology at Concordia Seminary, has convincingly proved in two excellent articles in the *Theological Quarterly*,¹ in which he treats the entire problem of John 6 from a larger point of view. We shall confine ourselves in this investigation to an evaluation of some of the statements by Luther which have a bearing on the subject.

The quotations from Luther in which he repudiates the eucharistic interpretation of John 6 cover the years of both his earlier and his later Scripture exposition. Luther, therefore, rejected the eucharistic interpretation not only as a be-

¹ Vol. XVIII (1914), No. 3, 159 ff.; Vol. XIX (1915), No. 2, 71 ff.

ginner in Scripture interpretation, but also as a mature theologian.

The Reformer, for example, rejected the eucharistic interpretation of John 6 in his *Operationes in Psalmos*, his interpretations of the first twenty-two Psalms, which were produced by him between 1519 and 1521, the time of his relatively early expository labors at Wittenberg. Luther had there begun his lectures on the Psalms in 1513 and concluded them in 1515. But moved by the numerous requests of his students, he resumed the expository work in the fall of 1518, continuing it until he left Wittenberg for Worms in 1521, by which time he had completed twenty-one Psalms. He finished the entire work at the Wartburg, after which the complete exposition was published, though parts of it had already appeared in 1519.²

Luther again repudiated the eucharistic interpretation in his *Church Postil*, in the editing and publishing of which four periods may be distinguished: 1524—1527, when Luther himself prepared his sermons for publication; 1527—1535, when the work of Rodt became prominent; 1540—1544, when Creuziger took an important part in the work; and after Luther's death in 1546, when his sermons were edited and published by various publishers at various times.³ The quotations regarding the eucharistic interpretation of John 6 are taken from various sermons of Luther, some of which belong to the earlier period and others to the later period.

Luther, moreover, denied the eucharistic interpretation in his "Exposition of Exodus," which he elaborated between 1524 and 1526.⁴

A most important series of sermons was preached by Luther in the City Church of Wittenberg from 1530 to 1532 (while Bugenhagen, the pastor of this congregation, was absent at Luebeck) on chapters 6 and 8 of John's Gospel. Also in these he rejects the eucharistic interpretation of John 6.⁵

An interesting repudiation of the eucharistic interpreta-

² *Die Hauptschriften Luthers in Chronologischer Reihenfolge*. Von P. E. Kretzmann, St. Louis, Mo.: Concordia Publishing House. Cf. St. Louis Ed., IV:359; Erl. XIV, 145—147; Walch IV, 417—420; Weimar V, 610 ff.

³ Cf. Introduction to Vol. XI, St. Louis Ed., p. 5.

⁴ St. Louis Ed., III:853; Erl. 35, 213—216; Walch III, 1276—1279; Weimar XVI, 224 ff.

⁵ St. Louis Ed., VII:2239; Erl. 47, 280—283; Walch VII, 1955—1958.

tion of John 6 by the great Reformer is found in *Dr. Martin Luther's Letter Against Some Factious Spirits (Rottengeister) to Margrave Albrecht in Brandenburg, Duke of Prussia*, which originated in April, 1532.⁶

Luther's *Table Talk* is a relatively late publication of the great Reformer, the diary of Conrad Cordatus being dated 1537 and that of Anton Lauterbach 1538, both sources of Luther's *Table Talk*. Here, too, in a striking setting, Luther denies the eucharistic interpretation of John 6.⁷

Thus throughout a period of more than two decades Luther rejected the eucharistic interpretation of John 6. During this time he wrote important works pertaining to the Lord's Supper; as, for example, *Against the Heavenly Prophets Regarding Images and the Sacrament* (1525); *A Sermon Concerning the Sacrament of the Body and Blood of Christ Against the Enthusiasts* (1526); *That the Words of Christ: "This Is My Body," etc., Still Stand Firm Against the Enthusiasts* (1527); *Dr. Martin Luther's Confession Concerning the Lord's Supper* (1528); his *Catechism* (1529); *Dr. Martin Luther's Letter Against Some Factious Spirits* (1532), mentioned above, and others, in which he points out the correct interpretation of John 6 and repudiates the false. In fact, Luther's *Brief Confession Concerning the Holy Sacrament Against the Enthusiasts* (1544) adds nothing new so far as his exposition of the prooftexts treating of the Lord's Supper and his refutation of erroneous interpretations by opponents are concerned. We may, therefore, say that Luther at no time in his ministry favored the eucharistic interpretation of John 6.

2

As we study Luther's rejection of the eucharistic interpretation of John 6, we find that, as usual, he first bases the aspects for his claims upon the text itself. According to his conception, the text itself teaches the spiritual eating and drinking of Christ's body and blood in all passages. That with him is a foregone conclusion.

Luther thus argues from the *sensus literalis* in an expository sermon on Exodus 12, in which he writes: "Faith is the eating, which preserves and strengthens us. . . . Hence

⁶ St. Louis Ed., XX:1679 ff.; Erl. 54, 281-283; Walch XX, 2088-2090.

⁷ St. Louis Ed. XXII:592.

such eating is nothing else than the true, right faith of the heart, which exists when you receive Christ with faith and know (acknowledge) that He has shed His blood for you and this is your comfort and strength in cross and affliction, because you believe it without any doubt of the heart: in such a way you eat Christ and digest Him in you . . . just as the Lord Christ says of this John 6:35: 'He that cometh to Me shall never hunger.' Here, too, you have the spiritual eating of the heart. For what a Christian receives with his mouth does not avail him for his Christianity (1 Cor. 8:8), but if the heart receives anything by faith, that helps; through that one becomes a rich, full Christian, so that everything pleases God that he does."⁸

Luther's reference here to John 6:35 is important because that passage teaches the spiritual eating and drinking in so many words. It reads (given in full): "I am the Bread of life: He that cometh to Me shall never hunger; and he that believeth on Me shall never thirst." Luther's interpretation is, therefore, textual and correct.

In his *Exposition of Ps. 22:4* Luther first refers to John 16:3 as stating the reason why the Jews rejected Christ, and then continues: "So also in John 6:53, when He said: 'Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink His blood, ye have no life in you,' this was a 'hard saying' (v.60), so that also many of His disciples went back and walked no more with Him (v.66). Why was this a hard saying? Because to eat this flesh and drink this blood means to become incorporated into Christ by faith and to take part in His suffering. But this the wicked mind and heart, corrupted by false opinions, abhors exceedingly much."⁹

The reference to John 6:35 here is seemingly accidental, but it shows that Luther takes the words "to eat Christ's flesh and to drink His blood" as signifying faith or, as He says, to "become incorporated into Christ by faith." That this is really in harmony with the scope of the text is clear from the words: "Except ye eat . . . ye have not life in you," which declare that there is no salvation without such spiritual eating by faith. Luther's exposition, therefore, satisfies the central thought of Christ's admonition (sc., the necessity of faith) also here.

⁸ St. Louis Ed., III: 853 f.; Erl. 35, 213—216; Walch III, 1276—1279.

⁹ St. Louis Ed., IV: 359; Erl. XIV, 145—147; Walch IV, 417—420.

In his sermon on John 6:49 Luther writes: "So, then, there begins a murmuring, and they ask: 'How can we eat Thy flesh?' But this is the explanation, namely, that He speaks of the spiritual flesh, that is, of spiritual eating. It is faith that eats Him, just as He Himself explains this when He says: 'He that believeth on Me hath everlasting life' (v. 47), that is, such a one eats rightly, for 'I am the Bread of life.' Faith is the one that eats; it eats and (so) believes in Christ. . . . So, then, when we hear that Christ is (the) Food and the Bread of heaven (it is necessary) that we cling to this (truth) in faith and hold on to it with appreciation and joy."¹⁰

Here again Luther proves his claim by referring to the clear words of Christ which demand that His hearers should believe in Him as the divine Savior.

In his "Sixteenth Sermon" on John 6:53-54, delivered on April 1, 1531, Luther writes: "Wherever, then, the Lord Christ is being preached that He has given His body into death for our sins and has shed His blood for us, and I heed it, firmly believe it, and cling to it, that it means to eat and drink His body and blood. *To eat* here means to believe. Whoever believes, he eats and also drinks Christ."¹¹

To this conclusion Luther is forced by Christ's words (v. 53): "Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink His blood, ye have not life in you," which Luther interprets thus: "Ye either eat My flesh and drink My blood, or you lose life and can nevermore be saved."¹² Because of this "either—or" the words must be interpreted in a figurative sense, meaning faith in Christ.

In his sermon on John 6:55-58, which was delivered on the Feast of Corpus Christi, perhaps in 1523, Luther writes: "That this is the correct understanding of the Gospel [the text on which he was preaching], namely, that it must be understood of the spiritual eating and drinking, the words show which the Lord speaks at the end of the chapter: 'It is the Spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing. The words that I speak

¹⁰ St. Louis Ed., VII:2321 f.; Erl. 47, 379-382; Walch VII, 2069-2071; Weimar XXXIII, 178. Luther here uses the word "Verstand" in the sense of "Verstaendnis," that is, understanding, or appreciation.

¹¹ St. Louis Ed., VII:2344; Erl. 48, 15-17; Walch VII, 2103-2106; Weimar XXXIII, 209 f.

¹² St. Louis Ed., VII:2343; Erl. 48, 12-15; Walch VII, 2100-2103; Weimar XXXIII, 208.

unto you, they are spirit, and they are life' (v. 63). With these words Christ means to say that the bodily eating of the flesh does not profit, but to believe that this flesh is God's Son, who came from heaven for my sake and has shed His blood for me, that is profitable, and that is life. For this reason to eat the flesh of the Son of God and to drink His blood means, as already said, nothing else than that I believe that His flesh was given for me and His blood was shed for me and that He overcame sin, death, the devil, hell and all (other) evil for me."¹³

As he concludes this sermon, Luther says: "This, then, is the true food. . . . Hence the eating must not be (understood as) an external eating, but (as) an eternal eating, which never ceases. And that is nothing else than to believe, as you have heard. This is demanded also by the passage which Christ addressed to the Jews (John 6:29): 'This is the work of God that ye believe on Him whom He hath sent.' If, then, we believe firmly that Christ is the Son of God, sacrificed for us,¹⁴ then we have life (in Christ)."¹⁵

3

Luther, however, not only rejects the eucharistic interpretation because he honestly believes this to be at variance with the clear meaning of the text, but time and again he argues his claim also from other reasons.

He thus believed that the eucharistic interpretation of John 6 rests on a *prolepsis*, that is, on the assigning of an event to a period earlier than its actual date.¹⁶ The Lord's Supper actually was not instituted until a considerable time (perhaps a whole year) after the discourse at Capernaum was delivered. There is in John 6:51-58 no institutional command: "This do in remembrance of Me," as, for instance, in Luke 22:19 and other passages. Nor do we read anywhere in the New Testament that the Lord's Supper was celebrated immediately after the Capernaum discourse had been addressed to the Jews. Again, when Christ instituted the Holy Supper, He did this in

¹³ St. Louis Ed., XI:2253; Erl. 15, 371-373; Walch XI, 2998-3001; cf. Weimar XII, 580-584.

¹⁴ Luther: *fuer uns dargegeben*, lit., "given for us."

¹⁵ St. Louis Ed., XI:2257; Erl. 15, 375-377; Walch XI, 3004-3007; cf. Weimar XII, 580-584.

¹⁶ Cf. Dau, "The Eucharistic Interpretation of John 6," *Theol. Quarterly*, XIX, 81.

the Upper Room in the midst of His chosen disciples, and not in company with a vast multitude of believing and unbelieving Jews. Dr. Dau is right when he argues that all who find in John 6 a *sedes doctrinae* for the Lord's Supper must hold that the Sacrament was actually in existence before it was instituted.¹⁷

While Luther does not expatiate upon this argument, he, nevertheless, very clearly mentions it. He does this, for example, in his sermon on John 6:44-51, preached on Pentecost Monday at Wittenberg. Here he says: "For this reason¹⁸ I have said that we must not forcibly apply¹⁹ these words to the Sacrament of the Altar; for whoever interprets them in that way wrests the sense of the passage. There is in this Gospel not a single letter which mentions the Sacrament of the Altar. *Why should Christ here think of the Sacrament when it was not yet instituted?* [Italics our own.] So also the whole chapter from which this Gospel [this text] is taken speaks of nothing else than of the spiritual food, namely, of faith. For when the people ran after the Lord and again wanted to eat and drink, as the Lord Himself explains it, He utilizes the occasion of the bodily food, which they sought, and speaks throughout the entire chapter of a spiritual food, as He said: 'The words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life' (v. 63). By this He wanted to show them that they should believe on Him, and as they enjoyed the bodily food, so also they should the spiritual."²⁰

In this passage Luther points out not only that the clear meaning of the words demand their spiritual interpretation, but also that the prolepsis involved is opposed to the eucharistic conception of the text. His argument: "Why should Christ here refer to the Sacrament, since it was not yet instituted?" is certainly well taken.

4

Again, Luther stresses the fact that the eucharistic interpretation of John 6 proves too much and, therefore, nothing at all.

¹⁷ Cf. *Loc. cit.*

¹⁸ A variant reading has this: "For this reason I would pray and remind you that you would not forcibly apply these words," etc.

¹⁹ Luther: "*Dass man diese Worte nicht zwingen sollt auf das Sakrament des Altars.*"

²⁰ St. Louis Ed., XI:1143 f.; Erl. 12, 403-405; Walch XI, 1542-1544.

Luther uses the argument that the eucharistic interpretation proves too much very effectively in several ways.

In the first place, he shows that if Christ's words must be interpreted eucharistically, then the papists must administer the Holy Supper *sub utraque specie* and so give to the lay communicants not only the bread, but also the cup. This, however, they refuse to do and thus defeat their own argument.

Luther does this, for example, in the opening paragraphs of his sermon preached at Wittenberg on the occasion of the feast of Corpus Christi, to which we have already referred, in which he speaks very sharply and challengingly. He says:

"This Gospel (text) has (been given) a twofold interpretation. One Christ Himself has given to it; the other, the pope (gave to it) or rather the devil. The one, which Christ Himself gives, is suggested by the words at the beginning of the Gospel, where the Lord says: 'For My flesh is meat indeed, and My blood is drink indeed. He that eateth My flesh and drinketh My blood dwelleth in Me, and I in him' (v. 55 f.). That is a strong promise that whoever should eat this food must remain in Christ and live eternally. The other interpretation, which the pope has given to it (the text), is this, that he has applied (the words) to the Sacrament of the Altar, which interpretation must stultify us if we use it.²¹ And if we wish to understand this Gospel as referring to the bread of the Altar (Lord's Supper), we place a sword into the hands of the Bohemians (the Hussites) so that they might cleave our heads.²² For from this Gospel they argue very stoutly against us and the whole chapter that we must receive and use both kinds (bread and wine) contrary to the order and institution of the pope. For thus reads the text of this Gospel: 'Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink His blood, ye have no life in you' (v. 53). . . . So it goes when we want to resort to an interpretation that is forced upon Scripture."²³

This, then, is Luther's argument: If some interpret the words eucharistically (as do the papists), they must give to the communicants both the bread and the cup, as the followers

²¹ Luther: "*Welches Verstandes man doch mit Schanden brauchen muss.*"

²² Luther: "*Dass sie uns durch die Koepfe hauen.*"

²³ St. Louis Ed., XI:2248 f.; Erl. 15, 367-369; Walch XI, 2993-2996; cf. Weimar XII, 580, 584.

of John Hus demand. But since they refuse to do this, they cannot maintain their eucharistic interpretation. They prove too much by their eucharistic interpretation, for they themselves decline to do what the text in that case demands.

In the second place, Luther shows that the eucharistic interpretation of John 6 proves too much from another point of view, which is ably set forth by Dr. Dau in the aforementioned article as follows: "Where the three evangelists and St. Paul present the doctrine of the Lord's Supper, they speak of an eating and drinking of the body and blood of the Lord which may bring damnation, viz., to an unworthy communicant, 1 Cor. 11:29. Such a possibility is not even remotely considered in John 6. On the contrary, we are told in vv. 54, 56 that the eating of His flesh and the drinking of His blood, of which the Lord speaks in this place, is always salutary; it is always to the end of obtaining eternal life. Those who appeal to John 6 as a *sedes doctrinae* for the Lord's Supper must grant, in order to hold their own ground, that no person can commune unworthily."

Luther, in his sermon preached on the feast of Corpus Christi, puts the argument thus: "Therefore, since here you clearly read: 'If any man eat of this bread, he shall live forever' (v. 51), the text forces us that it must be understood of another eating. It must be another food which the Lord gives than the Sacrament of the Altar, to which the Pope refers it. For we can use the Sacrament to our great detriment. We cannot silence St. Paul²⁴ when he says 1 Cor. 11:27: 'Wherefore, whosoever shall eat this bread and drink this cup of the Lord unworthily, shall be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord,' and soon afterwards (vv. 29-30): 'For he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation to himself, not discerning the Lord's body. For this cause many are weak and sickly among you and many sleep. All these words declare that we can receive the Sacrament unworthily, but the food of which the Lord here speaks we can nevermore receive unworthily. Therefore this Gospel does not apply to the bread of the Altar, for there is in it too clear a promise.'²⁵

²⁴ Luther: "Man kann je nicht St. Paulo das Maul verstopfen."

²⁵ St. Louis Ed., XI:2249 f.; Erl. 15, 367-369; Walch XI, 2993-2996; cf. Weimar XII, 580-584.

With a slightly different application Luther uses the same argument also in his "Sixth Sermon" on John 6, which he preached on December 10, 1530. Here he says in exposition of John 6:36: "To eat of His flesh and drink of His blood that means firmly to believe on Him. And here He does not speak of the Sacrament, but of those who should live eternally. For many run to the Supper of the Lord and, nevertheless, die eternally of hunger and thirst. But here the matter is quite different, so that he who eats the body shall neither hunger nor thirst. So Christ here speaks of the matter which means to believe. For He says: "You see Me and hear Me, and yet do not believe." ²⁶

With great force and effect Luther uses the argument also in his *Letter Against Some Factious Spirits to Margrave Albrecht in Brandenburg, Duke of Prussia* (April, 1532). Here he writes: "Such eating and drinking (as mentioned in John 6) can well take place outside Baptism and the Sacrament, alone by faith and through the preached Word of the Gospel. And no wicked person can so eat, just as little as a wicked person can believe and at the same time remain wicked. For He there says (John 6:51): 'If any man eat of this bread, he shall live forever.' And again (v. 35): 'Except ye eat of the flesh of the Son of Man and drink His blood, ye have no life in you.' For this reason all must believe who eat according to John 6, for they shall have life, as Christ says.

"And let it be said as in a sum: 'Whoever believes in Christ shall be saved.' But in the Lord's Supper both the worthy and the unworthy can eat, as St. Paul clearly shows 1 Cor. 11:27-29: 'For he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation to himself, not discerning the Lord's body.' For this reason not all (communicants) can eat unto life, as they must eat according to John 6. And so there is a great difference between John 6 and the Lord's Supper. For the former is a spiritual eating without a bodily eating, but here in the Lord's Supper there is a spiritual eating, however, only by believers; and, besides this, there is a bodily eating, which is common to both believers and unbelievers." ²⁷

Luther, then, argues thus: Since the eating and drinking

²⁶ St. Louis Ed., VII:2239 f.; Erl. 47, 280—283; Walch VII, 1955—1958.

²⁷ St. Louis Ed., XX:1678 ff.; Erl. 54, 281—283; Walch XX, 2088—2090.

mentioned in John 6 is always salutary, which cannot be said of the sacramental eating and drinking, the eucharistic interpretation of Christ's words in the chapter defeats itself, since it proves too much.

5

There is yet another argument which Luther uses against the eucharistic interpretation of John 6. It is this: While the eating and drinking of which Christ speaks in John 6 is always necessary for salvation, the sacramental eating is not absolutely necessary, so that believing children and adults can be saved even though they do not receive the Lord's Supper. This truth is embodied in the age-old axiom: "Not lack of the Sacrament, but contempt of it condemns." Since, however, Christ in John 6 insists upon the absolute necessity of eating His flesh and drinking His blood (John 6:53), He there cannot speak of the sacramental eating, but must have in mind the spiritual only.

Dr. Dau very nicely puts the argument thus: "In John the Lord speaks of an eating and drinking that is absolutely necessary for salvation: 'Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink His blood, ye have no life in you,' v. 53. But of the eating and drinking in the Lord's Supper Paul says 1 Cor. 11:28: 'Let a man examine himself, and so let him,' etc. Hence persons who are not capable of self-examination are not admitted to the Lord's Supper. Those who appeal to John 6 as a *sedes doctrinae* for the Lord's Supper are forced to believe, if they will be true to their own arguments, that all believers who have not communed will be damned."²⁸

Luther, too, at various times used this argument with great force. When, for example, Luther was asked whether the Hussites did right in administering the Lord's Supper to little children on the plea that the grace of God belonged to all men and that since they were to be saved, they also must use the venerable Sacrament as do the adults, the Reformer replied:

"It is wrong on their part to regard it necessary for the salvation of children to administer to them the Sacrament, though it may not be sinful, since St. Cyprian also did this. But since the passage John 6:53: 'Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of Man,' etc., which they adduce, does not belong to

²⁸ *Theol. Quarterly*, Vol. XIX, 81.

the Sacrament, but to faith, there is no need for administering the Sacrament to small children."²⁹

According to Luther, therefore, the sacramental eating is not absolutely necessary for salvation, while the spiritual eating, that is, faith in Christ, the divine Redeemer, is absolutely necessary.

In his sermon delivered on John 6:55-58 at Wittenberg on the feast of the Corpus Christi (1523) Luther writes with reference to v. 55:

"This eating and drinking is nothing else than to believe in the Lord Christ, who gave His flesh and blood for my sake, in order that He might redeem me from sin, death, the devil, hell, and all (other) evil. Such faith can never take place without (giving) life; for he who believes must live and be justified, as Habakkuk 2:4 declares: 'The just shall live by his faith.' So the eating takes place in the heart and not with the mouth. The eating in the heart never deceives, but the eating with the mouth (in Holy Communion) that does (may) deceive. The eating with the mouth ceases, but the other continues forever without ceasing. For the heart feeds and nurtures itself by faith in Christ. So, then, you see clearly that these words must not be understood with reference to the Sacrament of the Altar."³⁰

Hence, according to Luther, the sacramental eating is not necessary for salvation, while the spiritual eating, of which John 6 speaks, is absolutely necessary for salvation, so that it must be the latter to which our Lord refers.

6

There is yet another argument which Luther emphasizes against the eucharistic interpretation of John 6. It is this: While in the words of institution Christ promises His body and blood to eat and to drink in, with, and under the bread and wine, He mentions no external elements in John 6, so that also this very fact proves that He was not thinking in terms of the Holy Supper, when He addressed the Jews at Capernaum.

Dr. Dau, in his fine article, puts the argument thus: "In John 6 our Lord speaks of His flesh and blood, but names no

²⁹ St. Louis Ed., XXII:591 ff.

³⁰ St. Louis Ed., XI:2252; Erl. 15, 371-373; Walch XI, 2998-3001; cf. Weimar XII, 580-584.

external elements by means of which these are to be taken, while those elements are named and exhibited in the words of institution of the Lord's Supper. Those who appeal to John 6 as a *sedes doctrinae* for the doctrine of the Sacrament must do one of two things: either they must eat the flesh of Christ and drink His blood without any external means like the anthropophagi, or they must admit that the words 'eating' and 'drinking,' likewise the words 'flesh' and 'blood,' in John 6, cannot be taken literally, but must be understood figuratively, viz., for believing in the atoning sacrifice of Christ and those feasting on His merits with the mouth of faith."

Luther urges this matter especially in his *Letter Against Some Factious Spirits to Margrave Albrecht in Brandenburg*, in which he writes:

"It is true that in John 6 Christ does not speak of the Lord's Supper. Nor does He do anything with His hands. He also does not impart any bread or wine to His disciples, as He does in the Lord's Supper, but He preaches indiscriminately both to His disciples and the non-believers at Capernaum faith in Himself, which faith holds that He is true man with flesh and blood and that He gave them both for us (in death). This properly means to eat His body spiritually and to drink His blood spiritually. And He calls Himself the spiritual bread, which gives life to the world."³¹

This difference between John 6 and the passages that describe Christ's institution of the Lord's Supper, the former teaching an eating without elements and the latter with definite elements, is important for the right understanding of what Jesus meant to tell the Jews at Capernaum who desired to make Him their King. To them He meant to preach faith in Himself as the promised Messiah, who had come to procure for them eternal life. To His disciples in the Upper Room, when He instituted the Holy Supper, Christ meant to seal the forgiveness of sins which they already possessed by their faith in Him as the Light and the Life of the world.

7

Dr. Dau shows in great detail how not only the Roman Catholic theologians, but also the confessional writings of the Reformed churches and the writings of Reformed dogmaticians

³¹ St. Louis Ed., XX:1678; Erl. 54, 281—283; Walch XX, 2088—2090.

are full of references to John 6 as a eucharistic text.³² However, with respect to the Westminster Confession (XXIX, VII), he quotes the exposition by Shedd, in his *Dogmatic Theology*, II, 565, and then remarks: "Shedd and the Westminster Confession would agree with the Lutherans in understanding the eating and drinking in John 6 as an act of faith; both accept the spiritual signification of these terms. They would disagree in their application of this text to the Eucharist."

This explanation of Dr. Dau is most important, for while practically all Reformed divines have explained John 6 as referring to the spiritual eating of Christ's flesh, most of them sought in this great text some reference to the Lord's Supper to prove that in the Sacrament of the Altar there could be only a spiritual and no sacramental eating and drinking. Dr. Dau quotes Zwingli's *Fidei Ratio*, in which, to refute the papistic doctrine of transubstantiation, he says: "Christ Himself showed [the error of this belief] when to the Jews who were quarreling about the corporeal eating of His flesh He said: 'The flesh profiteth nothing,' namely, as regards natural eating; however, it profiteth very much as regards spiritual eating; for it gives life."³³

Dr. Dau in his article offers much other valuable *dogmengeschichtliches* material which the student might study in this connection. We quote only one remark of his: "Hodge correctly claims to be in harmony with the Lutherans in this view of John 6 [the spiritual eating and drinking]. But Hodge knows of no other eating and drinking of the body and blood of Christ than that which he has explained from John 6; for in the next paragraph he declares: 'To receive the body and blood as offered in the Sacrament, or in the Word [!], is to receive and appropriate the sacrificial virtue or effects of the death of Christ on the Cross.'"³⁴

It might interest the reader that J. Wilbur Chapman's *New Testament with Notes*, which the writer used for his *Concordia New Testament with Notes*, has this note on John 6:53: "Eat the flesh — drink the blood: not literally, but spiritually, as the food and drink of the soul; thus, by a living

³² *Theol. Quarterly*, XVIII, 163 ff.

³³ Quoted by Dau from Niemeyer, *Collectio Confessionum in Ecclesiis Reformatis Publicatarum*. Lips., 1840, pp. 27, 29.

³⁴ *Systematic Theology* III, 611, 648 ff.

union with Him through faith, receiving from Him forgiveness, sanctification, and eternal life. The Savior has in mind the gift, which He is about to make on the cross, of His flesh and blood for the life of the world. The view which He here gives of eating His flesh and drinking His blood, is the same that underlies the ordinance of the Lord's Supper, afterwards instituted by Him." (Italics our own.)

It is, therefore, true that the principal interest which Reformed divines had in the eucharistic interpretation of John 6 was that of finding in it some "proof" that in the Lord's Supper there could not be any sacramental eating and drinking. Theirs was a fallacy of *metabasis eis allo genos*; in other words, they used Scripture passages to "prove" a doctrine which these passages simply do not teach.

In his *Elementa Theologiae Dogmaticae* the Belgian Jesuit and teacher of theology Francis Xavier Schouppe takes his first proof for the real presence of Christ in the Sacrament from John 6; his second, from the words of institution; and his third, from 1 Cor. 10 and 11. He writes (translated from the Latin):

"First Proof I. *From the words of promise* which are set forth in John 6. For if Christ then really promised to give His body and blood to be manducated orally, it is absolutely certain, that the same Christ in the Eucharist is truly, really, and substantially present," etc.³⁵ This certainly is unanswerable logic if the premise could be granted!

8

In his article on the subject (Vol. XVIII, p. 162) Dr. Dau has an important footnote, which is to this effect: "Those exegetes who favor the eucharistic interpretation of John 6 and nonchalantly substitute for the 'flesh' of John 6 the 'body' of the words of institution, might appeal to Luther's remark in his *Bondage of the Will* (December, 1525): 'At this place one could say body for flesh.'" ³⁶ Luther refers to v. 63: "The flesh profiteth nothing." But he does not speak of the flesh of Christ. Compare, moreover, Luther's remark in his treatise

³⁵ *Elementa Theologiae Dogmaticae*. Francisci Xaverii Schouppe, S. J., Tom. II. Ed. *Vigesima Prima*, Delhomme et Brigue, Editeurs, Paris 13, Rue de l'Abbaye, 13.

³⁶ St. Louis Ed., XVIII:1877; Erl. VII, 287, 291; Walch XVIII, 2354 to 2358; Weimar XVIII, 735.

That These Words Still Remain Unshaken, etc. (April, 1527): "Flesh cannot be understood of Christ's body."³⁷

When the student of Luther consults the references given here, he will find that Luther is very careful in allowing the "flesh" of John 6 and the "body" of the words of institution to stand. He never uses the terms interchangeably; nor does he allow anyone to declare: "The *body* profiteth nothing." In fact, he proves at great length against the enthusiasts that the body of Christ is indeed exceedingly useful, both when it died on the Cross and when it is offered to the communicants in the Holy Supper.

It might be noted, too, how very faithful Luther is in his loyal adherence to the text of Scripture, whenever in his four great monographs on the Lord's Supper, directed against the Sacramentarians, he speaks of the *materia coelestis*, that is the celestial element, which the communicant, no matter whether worthy or unworthy, receives in, with, and under the bread and wine. Luther never adds to nor subtracts from the words which Christ Himself used in the words of institution, but uses consistently the words "body" and "blood." Nor does he, as did the papistic and Calvinistic opponents, substitute anything else for the body and blood, such as the "entire Christ," "the divine nature of Christ," "the divine efficacy of the body of Christ," etc. He readily admits that the whole Christ is truly present in the Sacrament by reason of His promise, which never fails, but what the communicant receives in the Sacrament with the bread and wine is no more and no less than the body and blood of Christ, the body that was given into death and the blood that was shed on the Cross. Nor does Luther rationalize the words of institution. To him the body is not a "pneumatic body" nor "the Christ according to the divine nature," nor "the effects of Christ's death," etc. It remains simply the "body and blood, given and shed for the remission of sins." To go beyond that, to try to define the body and blood of Christ more precisely, would have seemed unbearable arrogance to Luther in a mystery of godliness so vast that it in every way surpasses human comprehension.³⁸

³⁷ St. Louis Ed., XX: 840.

³⁸ For modern substitutes for body and blood cf. Pieper, F., *Christliche Dogmatik*, Vol. III, 415 ff. St. Louis, Mo.: Concordia Publishing House, 1920.

9

Doubts have been expressed whether or not the Formula of Concord of the Lutheran Church in all respects reproduces the thoughts of Luther with reference to the Holy Supper. It is manifest that the later developments of the Eucharistic Controversy, especially those after Luther's death, had much to do with the special formulation of the dogma as we find it set forth in Article VII of the Formula of Concord (*De Coena Domini*). But the doctrine is essentially that of Luther and reproduces the truths which the Reformer defended in his four great monographs against the Sacramentarians.³⁹

There is a passage in Article VII of the Formula of Concord which in this connection deserves careful study, namely, the one which well describes the twofold eating of the flesh of Christ. It sums up very nicely what the excerpts from Luther which we have quoted have set forth. We read:

"There is, therefore, a twofold eating of the flesh of Christ, one *spiritual*, of which Christ treats especially John 6:54, which occurs in no other way than with the spirit and faith, in the preaching and meditation of the Gospel, as well as in the Lord's Supper, and by itself is useful and salutary, and necessary at all times for salvation to all Christians; without which spiritual participation also the sacramental or oral eating in the Supper is not only not salutary, but even injurious and damning [a cause of condemnation].

"But this spiritual eating is nothing else than *faith*, namely, to hear God's Word (wherein Christ, true God and man, is presented to us, together with all benefits which He has purchased for us by His flesh given into death for us, and by His blood shed for us, namely, God's grace, the forgiveness of sins, righteousness, and eternal life), to receive it with faith and appropriate it to ourselves, and in all troubles and temptations firmly to rely, with sure confidence and trust, and to abide in the consolation that we have a gracious God, and eternal salvation on account of the Lord Jesus Christ. . . .

"The other eating of the body of Christ is *oral* or *sacramental*, when the true, essential body and blood of Christ are also orally received and partaken of in the Holy Supper by all who eat and drink the consecrated bread and wine in the

³⁹ Cf. F. Bente, Historical Introduction to Article VII in *Concordia Triglott*, 172 ff.

Supper — by the believing as a certain pledge and assurance that their sins are surely forgiven them, and Christ dwells and is efficacious in them, but by the unbelieving for their judgment and condemnation, as the words of the institution by Christ expressly declare, when at the table and during the Supper He offers His disciples natural bread and natural wine, which He calls His true body and true blood, at the same time saying: *'Eat and drink.'* For in view of the circumstances this command evidently cannot be understood otherwise than of oral eating and drinking, however, not in a gross, carnal, Capernaïtic, but in a supernatural, incomprehensible way; to which afterwards the other command adds still another and spiritual eating, when the Lord Christ says further: *'This do in remembrance of Me,'* where He requires faith [which is the spiritual partaking of Christ's body]."⁴⁰

Here, then, we find Luther's distinction between the spiritual and the oral or sacramental eating clearly and sharply stated. The spiritual eating occurs wherever the Gospel is being proclaimed and applied to men, both in the Sacrament and without it; the sacramental occurs only in the Sacrament.

In his Small Catechism Luther says: "It is not the eating and drinking, indeed, that does them [not the oral eating and drinking], but the words here written, 'Given and shed for you for the remission of sins'; which words, beside the bodily eating and drinking, are as the chief thing in the Sacrament; and he that believes these words has what they say and express, namely, the forgiveness of sins."

Here again we have Luther's clear distinction between the spiritual and oral eating of the Lord's body, both of which occur in the Sacrament, but so that it is the former which renders the partaker a "worthy communicant." Of this we shall speak later in greater detail. We quote the words here to show how highly Luther valued the spiritual eating, though he sharply distinguished between the spiritual and the sacramental eating.

10

When the question is raised why Luther so greatly emphasized the value of the spiritual eating in the Sacrament, we must recall his fundamental tenet that, properly speaking, it is the Word, and more properly still, the Gospel, which is

⁴⁰ Thorough Declaration, VII, 61—65. *Concordia Triglot*, p. 995.

the divinely appointed means of grace, the instrument by and through which God offers us His grace, procured by Christ Jesus. In opposition to the *ex opere operato* doctrine of Romanism and the immediate-operation doctrine of Zwinglianism, Luther invariably stresses the Gospel as the means by which faith is engendered and strengthened in the human heart. To Luther even the *materia coelestis* of the Sacrament, the body and blood of Christ, *per se* does not convey the sacramental blessing; in fact, it even may be received unto condemnation. The *materia coelestis* is merely the pledge and seal affixed to the Word, so that the Holy Supper is distinguished from other means of grace not merely by its individual communication (for that is true of absolution), but above all by its special conveyance of forgiveness of sins, life, and salvation with and under the pledge of Christ's body and blood. But, properly speaking, not the body and blood, but the Word, that is, the Gospel, makes the Sacrament a true means of grace.

This doctrine is very simply stated in Luther's Large Catechism, where he says: "The Word must make a Sacrament of the element, else it remains a mere element."⁴¹ Again: "For it (the Sacrament) is not founded upon the holiness of men, but upon the Word of God. . . . For this reason we go to the Sacrament, because there we receive such a treasure, by and in which we obtain forgiveness of sins. Why so? Because the words stand here and give us this."⁴²

Or: "But now the entire Gospel and the article of the Creed: *I believe a holy Christian Church, the forgiveness of sin, etc.*, are by the Word embodied in this Sacrament and presented to us. Why, then, should we allow this treasure to be torn from the Sacrament when they must confess that these are the very words which we hear everywhere in the Gospel, and they cannot say that these words in the Sacrament are of no use, as little as they dare say that the entire Gospel or Word of God, apart from the Sacrament, is of no use."⁴³

Thus, according to Luther, it is the Word that makes the Lord's Supper a Sacrament, and because of this there must be in the Sacrament the spiritual eating, that is, faith.

⁴¹ *Concordia Triglott*, p. 755.

⁴² *Ibid.*, p. 757.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, p. 759 f.

II

CHRIST'S WORDS IN JOHN 6 ASSERT A MOST
WEIGHTY TRUTH CONCERNING WORTHY
COMMUNING

1

The quotations from Luther which we appended last introduce a most important truth which the great Reformer stresses constantly: Christ's words in John 6 assert a most weighty truth concerning worthy communing. Although in John 6 Christ does not speak of the Holy Supper, He nevertheless points out the only way in which we can receive His spiritual blessings of pardon, life, and salvation, both outside and in Holy Communion, namely, the way of accepting His given promises by true faith. This is, of course, a well-known truth, though often it is left out of consideration.

Luther's conception of the Sacrament is that of the *verbum visibile*, that is, the divine Word, or the Gospel, illustrated to us in its full graciousness by a sacred external action. In the final analysis the *visible* does not matter so very much; but what is essential is the fact that the Sacrament is properly nothing else than the *verbum Dei*, or the *evangelium Christi*, applied to the communicant under the pledge of Christ's body and blood. And this message must be believed by the communicant if he is to obtain the divine gifts which Christ offers in the Sacrament, so that there can be no worthy or beneficial eating without faith. In other words, while Luther fights hard for the Scriptural doctrine of the Real Presence, he also emphasizes, from the practical point of view, as the most important thing in the Sacrament, the spiritual eating and drinking.

Luther does this not only in the words of the Small Catechism, quoted above, in which he says: "It is not the eating and drinking, indeed, that does them, but the words here written, 'Given and shed for you for the remission of sins'; which words, beside the bodily eating and drinking, are as the chief thing in the Sacrament; and he that believes these words has what they say and express, namely, the forgiveness of sins," but also in the following: "Fasting and bodily preparation is, indeed, a fine outward training; but he is truly worthy and well prepared who has faith in these words, 'Given and shed for you for the remission of sins.' But he that does not believe

these words, or doubts, is unworthy and unprepared; for the words 'for you' require all hearts to believe."

Faith in the words of Christ, "Given and shed for you for the remission of sins," or the spiritual eating of Christ's body, according to Luther, is therefore absolutely necessary for obtaining the blessings of the Sacrament. While faith does not constitute the essence of the Sacrament, that is to say, while the faith of the recipient, or that of the celebrant, does not make the Supper a Sacrament (for the Sacrament exists by virtue of Christ's institution), the faith of the communicant is, nevertheless, necessary for receiving the benedictions which the Sacrament offers. The Gospel in the Sacrament is the conferring means, while faith is the receiving means.

This weighty truth Luther stresses more fully in his monograph against Zwingli and his adherents, *That These Words Still Stand Firm Against the Enthusiasts*, in which he writes:

"Again I ask: What, if I eat Christ's flesh in the Lord's Supper in a bodily manner (that is, orally or sacramentally) in such a way that I at the same time eat it also spiritually, will you then not concede that Christ's flesh in the Lord's Supper is indeed very profitable? But how can that be? Thus: I will eat His body with the bread in a bodily way, and in my heart I will also at the same time believe that it is the body which was given for me for the remission of sins, as the words declare (Luke 22:19): 'This is My body, which is given for you,' which you yourselves call a spiritual eating.⁴⁴ If, then, spiritual eating takes place, the bodily eating can do no harm, but must be profitable on account of the spiritual eating.

"But you reply that we separate the spiritual eating from the bodily. . . . When have you ever heard us say that we eat the Supper of Christ in such a way, or that we teach that it should be so eaten, that there be only an external, bodily eating of the body of Christ? Have we not taught in many books that in the Lord's Supper two things must be noted? The one is the highest and most necessary; namely, the words: 'Take, eat; this is My body,' etc. The other is the Sacrament or the bodily (sacramental) eating of the body of Christ. No one can receive the words through the mouth into the body; he must receive them into the heart through his ears.

⁴⁴ The St. Louis Ed. here has Matt. 26:26, which, however, does not give the words of institution as Luther quotes them.

But what does he receive into the heart through the words? Nothing else than what the words say, namely, 'the body (is) given for us,' which is the spiritual eating. And we have added to this that whoever eats the Sacrament without such words, or without such spiritual eating, to him it not only does not profit, but to him it is even harmful, as Paul says, 1 Cor. 11:27: 'Wherefore whosoever shall eat this bread, and drink this cup of the Lord, unworthily, shall be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord.'"⁴⁵

Here, then, Luther emphasizes the spiritual eating or the communicant's faith in the sacramental promise as the chief thing in the Sacrament. This thought is repeated and applied in all the controversial monographs on the Lord's Supper.

We find it, for example, in his *Confession Concerning the Lord's Supper*, written in 1528. Here Luther says (just to quote but one of his many statements): "Therefore we say that there is forgiveness of sins in the Lord's Supper not because of the eating, or because Christ there merits or procures forgiveness of sins, but on account of the Word, by which He distributes the forgiveness which has been procured, saying: 'This is My body, which is given for you.' There you hear that we eat the body as the one given for us, and as we eat, we heed and believe this. For this reason that forgiveness of sins is there (in the Sacrament) imparted which was secured on the Cross."⁴⁶

In his *Large Catechism* Luther speaks of the spiritual eating, that is, he connects faith in the sacramental promise again and again. We quote only one brief paragraph:

"Now we must also see who is the person that receives this power and benefit. That is answered briefly, as we said above of Baptism and often elsewhere: Whoever believes it has what the words declare and bring. For they are not spoken or proclaimed to stone and wood, but to those who hear them, to whom He says: *Take and eat*, etc. And because He offers and promises forgiveness of sin, it cannot be received otherwise than by faith. This faith He Himself demands in the Word when He says: *Given and shed for you*. As if He said: For this reason I give it and bid you eat and drink that you may claim it as yours and enjoy it. Whoever now accepts these words

⁴⁵ St. Louis Ed., XX:830 f.; Erl. 30, 85-87; Walch XX, 1035-1038.

⁴⁶ St. Louis Ed., XX:925; Erl. 30, 182-184; Walch XX, 1155-1158.

and believes that what they declare is true has it. But whoever does not believe it has nothing, as he allows it to be offered to him in vain and refuses to enjoy such a saving good (und nicht will solches heilsamen Gutes genießen). The treasure, indeed, is opened and placed at everyone's door, yea, upon his table, but it is necessary that you also claim it and confidently view it as the words suggest to you."⁴⁷

2

Christ's words in John 6:47-58 thus teach a weighty truth with regard to worthy communing, namely, that as Luther time and again points out, there can be no worthy communing unless the communicant does that very thing which Christ demands in this important passage; that is to say, unless He eats Christ's flesh and drinks His blood spiritually, that is, unless he believes in Christ as the divine-human Savior who has died for his sins and now offers to him in the Sacrament the very forgiveness which He secured for him personally by His vicarious suffering and death.

For the pastor in his practical ministry this weighty truth is of the greatest importance; for it must be his aim so to prepare his communicants for the reception of the Holy Supper that they believe not merely that Christ has died for the sins of the world in general (*fides generalis*), but that He died for the sins of each individual communicant and that He now offers to him personally under the pledge of the body and blood, imparted with the bread and wine, complete pardon with life and salvation (*fides specialis*). In other words, John 6:47-58 must be made so real to them that they confidently trust in the Savior, who offers to them with His body and blood all the blessings which He procured for the world by giving His life and shedding His blood for their salvation. Luther in his writings on the Lord's Supper very earnestly and emphatically calls attention to this fact, as he always keeps in mind the *usus practicus* of the Holy Communion.

3

But there remains still another question. If indeed Luther so earnestly inculcated the spiritual eating and drinking of Christ's body and blood, both outside and in the Holy Supper,

⁴⁷ "The Sacrament of the Altar" in the *Concordia Triglot*, p. 761, 33-35.

why did he so vehemently insist upon the Real Presence over against the Reformed? He himself answers this question at various places in his monographs on the Lord's Supper. Again we quote only a few of his statements. Luther, for example, writes:

"For this reason we must everywhere regard the Word and honor it. For with it God, as it were, takes and clothes the creatures, and there must be a difference between the Word and the creature. As, for example, there is bread and wine in the Sacrament of the Altar, and there is water in Baptism. These (bread, wine, water) are creatures, but are comprehended in the Word. And as long as the creature is comprehended in the Word, so long it works and effects what is promised in the Word. . . . In the Sacrament of the Altar there is, besides the promise of the forgiveness of sins, also this, that with the bread and wine there are truly given the body and blood of Christ. For so Christ says (Luke 22:19, 20): 'This is My body, which is given for you.' 'This cup is the new testament in My blood, which is shed for you.'"⁴⁸

In these words Luther expresses his great reverence for the Word of God, which, as he says, we must regard [in German: *auf das Wort sehen*] and honor. It is the divine Word which makes Baptism and the Lord's Supper true, efficacious Sacraments. In the Holy Supper the Word or promise of Christ offers forgiveness of sins in addition to His body and blood. Luther, then, contends for the Real Presence, because Christ's words of institution very plainly teach the Real Presence.

In his *Letter of Warning Addressed to Ministers at Frankfurt on the Main Asking Them to Beware of the Zwinglians and Their Doctrine* (written December, 1532, and published January, 1533) Luther writes:

"With this their talk [the Zwinglians, who denied the Real Presence] the words of Christ are set aside, so that they believe unwarrantedly (*frei hin*), without the Word, in the air, according to their own thoughts. But I want to have the words [of Christ] and upon them place my faith as they read [*wie sie lauten*] so that I do not want to believe the body which Christ means outside and without His Word, but the body which His words signify, just as they stand and read. For that

⁴⁸ Exposition of Gen. 3:23-24: St. Louis Ed., I:279 ff.; Erl. 1, 289 to 291; Walch I, 418-421.

is His true meaning, and He has told and indicated to us His meaning in the words and through the Word. Outside His Word and without His Word we know of no Christ, much less of Christ's meaning, for the "Christ" who pretends to give us his meaning without Christ's Word is the damnable devil out of hell, who uses Christ's holy name and under it sells his hellish venom."⁴⁹

Here again, against the Zwinglians, Luther insists upon the Real Presence for the simple reason that it is taught in the simple and clear words of the institution of the Holy Supper.

In his *Letter to a Good Friend Regarding His Book on the Silent Mass* (1534) Luther writes:

"And such body and blood of the Son of God Jesus Christ not only the saints and worthy, but also the sinners and unworthy truly take and receive in a bodily manner (orally), though invisibly. . . . That is my faith. That I know, and that no one shall take from me. For I confess it not only for the reason that I for myself have often and on many occasions received great comfort from such faith in the Sacrament in my deep and great anxieties and troubles . . . but also for that reason that I desire to stand by the clear, perspicuous (oeffentlichen), sure text of the Gospel with my witness (as much as I possibly can) against all other errors, both old and new, and (against all) heresy."⁵⁰

Here Luther declares that He defends the Real Presence as the clear teaching of Scripture, from which he has often received consolation and which, therefore, he means to defend against all ancient and modern heresy on the point.

In his writing *That These Words of Christ: "This Is My Body," etc., Still Stand Firm Against the Enthusiasts* Luther declares:

"We stand firmly and immovably upon this statement: 'This is my body,' which is altogether lucid, sure, and clear, so that it can be made obscure and uncertain by no art or might of the Enthusiasts."⁵¹

In his *Large Catechism* Luther writes: "Now here stands the Word of Christ: 'Take, eat; this is My body; drink ye all

⁴⁹ St. Louis Ed. XVII:2015; Erl. (2) 26, 378—380; Walch XVII, 2443 to 2446.

⁵⁰ St. Louis Ed., XIX:1290; Erl. 31, 382—384; Walch XIX, 1573—1575.

⁵¹ St. Louis Ed., XX:841; Erl. 30, 96—98; Walch XX, 1048—1051.

of it; this is the new testament in My blood, etc.' Here we abide, and would like to see those who will constitute themselves His masters and make it different from what He has spoken. It is true, indeed, that if you take away the Word or regard it without the words, you have nothing but mere bread and wine. But if the words remain with them, as they shall and must, then, in virtue of the same, it is truly the body and blood of Christ. For as the lips of Christ say and speak, so it is, as He can never lie or deceive."⁵²

4

To sum up: 1. Luther defends the Real Presence because he believes it to be a doctrine clearly taught in Holy Scripture. 2. He rightly maintains that John 6:47-58 must not be interpreted in a eucharistic sense, since that is contrary to the clear meaning and scope of the text. 3. Nevertheless, these words inculcate the spiritual eating of Christ by faith, and just that is what benefits the communicant, whereas the unbelieving, impenitent communicant, though he receives the true body and blood of Christ with the bread and wine, "eats and drinks damnation to himself, not discerning the Lord's body" (1 Cor. 11:29). 4. Luther recognizes no *ex opere operato* action of the Holy Supper. Hence John 6:56: "He that eateth My flesh and drinketh My blood dwelleth in Me and I in him," must not be applied to the sacramental eating and drinking, but to the spiritual eating and drinking by faith, by which the believer through the Gospel, in and outside the Eucharist, is so intimately united with his Savior that there exists a mutual indwelling which passes understanding. From this point of view John 6:47-58 certainly is of the greatest importance to all who desire the blessings of the forgiveness of sins, life, and salvation, which are offered to all communicants in the Holy Supper.

St. Louis, Mo.

⁵² The Sacrament of the Altar in the *Concordia Triglott*, p. 755 f., 12-14.

Luther's Endorsement of the *Confessio Bohemica*

By JAROSLAV PELIKAN, JR.

As a result of the research that has been carried on in the past half century on the theology of the Reformation, we are now in an advantageous position for a historical and theological evaluation of the faith of the Reformers. What began as purely historical investigation has become instead a recovery of Reformation insights that had been lost in the intervening centuries. For this reason contemporary theological scholarship has been compelled to buttress its systematic presentations with historical material and to make its historical study relevant by drawing theological conclusions from it.

That situation has given deeper meaning to a study of the confessional documents produced by the Reformation. For in such study the historical and the systematic are uniquely combined. The twofold task which contemporary scholarship has set itself—to discover what the Reformation meant and to discover what it means—is precisely the responsibility of the student of Reformation confessions. "Konfessionskunde" in Germany and "motif-research" in Sweden share this twofold concern with the historical and the relevant.¹

The confessional documents that emerged from the Reformation can conveniently be divided into two groups. Of primary importance are those that still claim the loyalty of sections of Protestantism, like the Augsburg Confession, the Formula of Concord, the Westminster Confession, and others. In the study of these, interest in theological relevance has often been permitted to obscure the historical facts surrounding their origin. What may be termed "secondary confessions" are those that at one time represented the faith of certain churches, but that no longer adequately describe the position of any group within organized Christendom. As theological concern has often made historical candor difficult in the case of the primary confessions, so in the case of the secondary confessions a pedantic and archaeological interest in historical minutiae has often stood in the way of genuinely theological research.

¹ On "Konfessionskunde" see Otto Piper in Vergilius Ferm (ed.), *An Encyclopedia of Religion* (New York, 1945), p. 422, and J. L. Neve, *Churches and Sects of Christendom* (2d ed.; Blair, 1944), pp. 35–38; on the Swedish "motif-research" see Edgar Carlson, *The Reinterpretation of Luther* (Philadelphia, 1948), esp. pp. 36–44.

The confession of faith whose origin we have examined in two previous articles in this journal² belongs to the second group; in spite of feeble efforts to revive it as the confessional standard of modern Czech Protestantism, the *Confessio Bohemica* of 1535 remains as a purely historical document, without immediate contemporary significance. What endows it with significance is not primarily its own content, but the fact that its composition was associated with the theology of the most important Christian thinker since the days of the Apostles, Martin Luther. No investigation of the *Confessio* therefore can content itself with historical examination of the circumstances under which it was produced. It must go on to consider the relationship of the *Confessio* and Luther's theology. It is to this latter problem that the present essay is addressed.

Luther's subscription to the *Confessio Bohemica* was the result of a process which lasted almost twenty years; that process has been described in the foregoing two articles. But a description of the process is not an explanation of the event. For even after a consideration of the facts of the case, the question still remains: Why did Luther approve of the *Confessio Bohemica* of 1535? What were the precipitating factors in his sponsoring of that confession?

I

One of the factors that brought about Luther's endorsement of the *Confessio Bohemica* was the regard for Hus which we traced in our first essay. Closely connected with it was Luther's sense of gratitude to Hus and to Hus' church for the historical continuity which they provided. "Abscondita est ecclesia, latent sancti," wrote Luther to Erasmus:³ the Church, at least at the present, is hidden. But he was equally sure that "die Heilige Christliche kyrche nicht untergehet bis ans ende der welt."⁴ That applied to the Middle Ages, too; and Hus was a proof to Luther that there was a Church also under the Papacy.⁵ In short, though Hus was not, as has sometimes been maintained, the source for Luther's

² "Luther's Attitude Toward John Hus," *CONCORDIA THEOLOGICAL MONTHLY*, XIX (1948), 747-763; "Luther Negotiations with the Hussites," *ibid.* XX, 496-517.

³ "De servo arbitrio" (1525), *Werke* (Weimar, 1881 ff.; hereafter abbreviated as WA) 18, 652; cf. "arca abscondita," "Ad librum . . . Catharini . . . responsio" (1521), WA, 7, 722.

⁴ "Deutsch Catechismus" (1529), WA 30-I, 218. It is interesting that he mentions Hus in this connection as one of the "Vetern."

⁵ See the pertinent passages in Karl Holl, "Luther und das landesherrliche Kirchenregiment," *Gesammelte Aufsätze zur Kirchengeschichte*, I, *Luther* (7th ed.; Tuebingen, 1948), pp. 369-70.

view of the Church as invisible, or, rather, as hidden,⁶ he was an indication of the continuity of the Church despite the apostasy of medieval Catholicism. That moment was of great historical significance, as Elert has shown.⁷ In addition, it had considerable significance for Luther's sense of mission and vocation. Like Johann Hilten,⁸ Hus had prophesied of Luther's coming;⁹ and later Lutheranism was quite in keeping with Luther when it saw in Hus' predictions "oracula et prophetias de opere reformationis . . . et Antichristi revelatione Lutheri ministerio."¹⁰

Also worthy of consideration in this question is Luther's appreciation of the semantic difficulties involved in the composition of a religious confession. Much in Luther does indeed give the impression as though, to use Brunner's striking phrase, "the Word of God is again made compassable";¹¹ as a result even his liberal

⁶ Ernst Rietschel, *Das Problem der unsichtbar-sichtbaren Kirche bei Luther*, No. 154 of "Schriften des Vereins fuer Reformationsgeschichte" (Leipzig, 1932), pp. 25-26. Nevertheless, the phrase "universitas praedestinatorum," which Luther employed at the Leipzig Debate, was Hussitic as well as Augustinian; cf. "Luther's Attitude," p. 754, note 53, and Werner Elert, "Die Botschaft des VII. Artikels der Augsbургischen Konfession," *Allgemeine Evangelisch-Lutherische Kirchenzeitung*, 60 (1927), 1035. For a summary, cf. Ernst Troeltsch, *Die Soziallehren der christlichen Kirchen und Gruppen* (Tuebingen, 1923), pp. 401-403, who sees in the phrase the makings of sectarianism; for Luther, however, it seems to have meant quite the opposite. See also Reinhold Seeberg's comment, "dasz die Formel congregatio praedestinatorum fuer Luthers Kirchengedanken durchaus nicht bestimmend ist," *Lehrbuch der Dogmengeschichte*, IV-1 (3d ed.; Leipzig, 1917), 279, note 1. The thought did, however, occur frequently in Luther; cf. the passages in Holl, "Die Entstehung von Luthers Kirchenbegriff," *op. cit.*, p. 293, note 9.

⁷ Werner Elert, *Morphologie des Luthertums* (2 vols.; Muenchen, 1931-1932), I, 428. And so to Luther can in a sense be traced the conception of Christian history which Lutheranism later adopted. The absolute ultimate of that conception is well illustrated by a man like Johann Georg Walch. Walch felt that under the Papacy "der groeszte Teil was zwar vom Glauben abgefallen. Doch fand sich noch ein kleines Haeuflein der Glaebigen. Solches bestunde aus den Kindern, die nach empfangener Taufe starben: aus solchen einfaeltigen Leuten, welche die Grund-Wahrheiten der Seeligkeit in Einfalt des Herzens annahmen und aus den oeffentlichen Zeugen der Wahrheit," among which latter "gehoeert die vornehmste Stelle dem Johann Hussen": "Vorrede" to Adam Lebrecht Mueller, *Des standhaftigen Maertyrers M. Johann Huszens, Predigers und Professors zu Prag Entdecktes Luthertum vor Luther* (Jena, 1728). The book is preserved in the library of Valparaiso University.

⁸ Cf. the Apology to the Augsburg Confession, *Concordia Triglotta* (Saint Louis, 1921), pp. 419-421.

⁹ Adolf Hauffen, "Husz ein Gans — Luther ein Schwan," *Prager deutsche Studien*, 9 (1908), 1-28, has collected all the references and offers an excellent exposition.

¹⁰ Johann Gerhard, "De Vocatione Beati Lutheri," *Loci Theologici*, edited by E. Preuss, VI (Berlin, 1867), 87.

¹¹ Emil Brunner, *The Divine-Human Encounter* (Philadelphia, 1943), p. 31.

interpreters have granted that he endowed faith with a content that they are unwilling to give it.¹² Nevertheless, he criticized the Roman Catholic system for its objectivism and absolutism—at the same time that he was himself objectifying! That same ambivalence is apparent also in his attitude toward the possibility of expressing the Christian faith in terms of human language. He criticized the ecumenical creeds and conciliar decisions,¹³ and yet he could at times be almost traditional in his treatment of them.¹⁴

That sensitivity for the conditioned character of even the ecumenical descriptions of the Christian faith was due at least partly to Luther's own version of an ancient theory of semantics and knowledge. Propounded by Plato¹⁵ and occupying a prominent place in Hebrew thought as well, the theory of the superiority of the spoken to the written word has had an interesting history.¹⁶ Luther adapted it to his view on the dynamic character of the Christian Gospel—"non de Euangelio scripto sed vocali loquor."¹⁷ His favorite word for the Gospel was "Predigt";¹⁸ and in a fascinating, if philologically questionable exposition of the word "Beth-

¹² Even W. Herrmann, despite the brief to which he was writing, had to admit that "wohl ist auch Luther bisweilen dem Gewichte einer Ueberlieferung erlegen, die dem Autoritaetsglauben, der Unterwerfung unter unverstandene Lehre die Kraft zutraute, dem Menschen das Himmelreich zueroeffnen," *Der Verkehr des Christen mit Gott* (7th ed.; Leipzig, 1921), p. 176, where appropriate quotations are given. Cf. Ludwig Ihmels, *Die christliche Wahrheitsgewiszheit: ihr letzter Grund und ihre Entstehung* (3d ed.; Leipzig, 1914), pp. 127–35, for a critique of Herrmann's use of Luther; Ihmels' own interpretation, pp. 10–37, comes to the admission "dasz Luthers Position, eben weil er nirgends sie theoretisch entwickelt hat, Fragen offen laeszt, zu deren Beantwortung bei ihm sich wohl Andeutungen finden, ohne dasz sie jedoch von ihm zu diesem Zweck verarbeitet waeren," p. 31, which is certainly true of Luther's position on this particular problem. See also Albrecht Ritschl's incomplete work, *Fides implicita* (Bonn, 1890), p. 70.

¹³ Cf. "Von den Conciliis und Kirchen" (1539), WA 50, 509–653, and the comments of F. Cohrs and O. Brenner, pp. 493–500.

¹⁴ See the terse presentation of the entire attitude in Otto Ritschl, *Dogmengeschichte des Protestantismus*, I (Leipzig, 1908), 268–75: "Luther und die dogmatische Tradition der alten Kirche."

¹⁵ Socrates speaks of "the word which is written with intelligence in the minds of the hearers," and his companion of "the living and breathing word of him who knows, of which the written word may justly be called the image," *Phaedrus*, 276 A.

¹⁶ No adequate treatment of that history is known to me. It would have to deal, to speak only of theology, with such diversified themes as the rabbinical Memra, the Logos in Philo and in Byzantine thought, Horace Bushnell's "Dissertation on Language," and the principles of the "Dorpat school."

¹⁷ "Ad librum Catharini responsio," WA 7, 721.

¹⁸ Elert, *Morphologie*, I, 60, 165–66.

phage" he expounded his view that the Church is a "Mundhaus," not a "Federhaus."¹⁹

Nowhere was Luther more conscious of the relation between the written and the spoken word than in his dealings with other Protestants, especially in the 1530's. Probably because of the logomachy which had resulted from the Sacramentarian controversies,²⁰ Luther was moved to write to the clergy in Augsburg in July of 1535:

Quanto gaudio vestras, charissimi fratres, acceperim literas, malo ex viva epistola, qui est vester D. Gereon et Caspar Hueber, vos cognoscere, quam ex elementis istis grammaticis et mortuis.²¹

That mood asserted itself even more effectively while Luther was dealing with the *Unitas Fratrum*. As we have seen,²² he frequently alluded to the fact that their writings often made him suspicious of their views, but that a personal interview set things straight. This he attributed to the fact that their faith was tied to their language; hence, anyone who did not read and understand Czech could not understand them.²³ And though he did not particularly like that fact,²⁴ he nevertheless took account of it. It seems clear that in his endorsement of the *Confessio Bohemica* of 1535, Luther was striving to go beyond the written word of the confession to the meaning behind it.²⁵

Yet another factor accounting for Luther's stand on the *Confessio Bohemica* is the change which had come about in the

¹⁹ Sermon on Matt. 21:1-9 for first Advent Sunday, *Saemmtliche Schriften* (Saint Louis Edition, henceforth abbreviated as *StL*) 11, 28-29.

²⁰ This is not to assert, as has sometimes been said, that the theological difference between Luther and his opponents in the Sacramentarian controversies was a battle over words; it sometimes became that, but it always was more. Indeed, the problem of that difference was basic to Luther's religiousness and cannot be brushed aside today. See in brief Ernst Sommerlath, "Luthers Lehre von der Realpraesenz in Abendmahl im Zusammenhang mit seiner Gottesanschauung" in Robert Jelte (ed.), *Das Erbe Martin Luthers und die gegenwaertige theologische Forschung: Festschrift fuer Ludwig Ihmels* (Leipzig, 1928), pp. 320-38.

²¹ Luther to the clergy in Augsburg, July 20, 1535, *Briefwechsel*, edited by Enders and Kawerau (hereafter abbreviated as *E-K*) 10, 177. See their answer to him, September 8, 1535, *E-K* 10, 214-15: "Unsers Schreibens halben sollen E. E. nicht zweifeln, dasz wir nicht eine todte Schrift, sondern unser lebendig Herz E. E. zugeschickt haben, wie wir aus dermaszen gewiszlich dafuer halten, dasz wir nicht todte Buchstaben, sondern das lebendige Herz christlicher Liebe von euch empfangen haben."

²² See "Luther's Negotiations," p. 511, note 97; p. 514, note 114; p. 515, note 121.

²³ "Deutsche Messe und Ordnung des Gottesdienstes" (1526), *WA* 19, 7.

²⁴ See "Luther's Negotiations," p. 511, note 98; p. 513, note 108.

²⁵ Cf. Loofs' explanation, referred to in note 63 of this essay, and Luther's views on logomachy while discussing the Wittenberg Concord, notes 54-55.

theological tenor of the Unity because of their association with him. One by one all the objectionable tendencies among them were removed; by 1538 they were all gone, and so he could and did endorse their confession. He had, for example, taken sharp issue with Lukáš' view of the function of reason in religious matters.²⁶ He had similar compunctions about the spiritualism which evidently made the Brethren despise education in general and the study of foreign languages in particular.²⁷ The fact that they rebaptized converts from Roman Catholicism displeased him, too.²⁸ But at Luther's suggestion they added a combination of spiritualism to their *Apologia*.²⁹ They strove to make it clear to him that they had abandoned the practice of rebaptizing³⁰ and that they were willing to make almost any concession — as indeed they did³¹ — to win his approval. All this marked them as open-minded men — "weak brothers," according to Luther's definition.³² That attitude of irenic humility must certainly be taken into account as a factor in Luther's endorsement of the *Confessio Bohemica* of 1535.

II

Each of these considerations was instrumental in moving Luther to treat the *Confessio Bohemica* with sympathy. But the fundamental problem in his dealings with the Brethren had been that of the Lord's Supper, and this is the crux in a discussion of Luther's endorsement of the *Confessio*. Why Luther was willing to tolerate the view of the Brethren and yet was unwilling to accept Ulrich Zwingli's formulation, was difficult for his con-

²⁶ See "Luther's Negotiations," p. 511, note 96. Interestingly, President T. G. Masaryk, following Palacky, based his philosophy of Czech history partly on this divergence between Luther and Lukáš: *Světová Revoluce* (Praha, 1925), pp. 589—90.

²⁷ "An die Ratsherren aller Staedte Deutschlands" (1524), WA 15, 42—43. Too often, however, Luther's exclamation "geyst hyn, geyst her," WA 15, 42, has been taken as the complete picture. Any such attempt to resolve the tension of "wort und geyst" is, however, invalidated by a counterexclamation like "gottes wort hyn, gottes wort her," WA 24, 12, written in 1527 against what may be termed "biblicistic spiritualism." On the problematics of this tension in Luther and later Lutheranism, see the exposition of R. H. Gruetzmacher, *Wort und Geist. Eine Untersuchung zum Gnadenmittel des Wortes* (Leipzig, 1901).

²⁸ Sermon on Matt. 8:1-13 for third Sunday after Epiphany, StL 11, 489—90.

²⁹ It condemned those "qui se in quodam spiritu et in quibusdam conflictis ab se rebus substantialibus sive essentialibus, hoc est, in phantasie sue visis fundant": Balthasar Lydius, *Waldensia* (Rotterdam, 1616), Ib, 246.

³⁰ Elders of the Bohemian Brethren to Luther, October 8, 1536, E-K 11, 94—95.

³¹ We have referred to their concessions on celibacy and on the time of grace in the essay, "Luther's Negotiations," p. 516, note 128.

³² Cf. "Luther's Negotiations," p. 501, note 30.

temporaries to understand. Modern interpreters have not had less difficulty with the problem.

Was the doctrine of the Brethren similar to that of Zwingli? If so, why did Luther accept the one and reject the other? Assuming such a similarity, some of Luther's contemporaries urged that he reconsider the stand he had taken at Marburg in 1529. Such objections made themselves heard shortly after that colloquy,³³ and when the "Rechenschaft" appeared with Luther's preface, some of Zwingli's followers hoped that now Luther would revise his previous position.³⁴ With a similar interest in mind, Th. Diestelmann has used Luther's dealings with the Brethren as substantiation for the possible historicity of a disputed conversation between Luther and Melanchthon about Zwingli.³⁵

Faced with the same problem, other interpreters have suggested that the *Confessio Bohemica* of 1535 represents a completely Lutheran position. So, for instance, the "alter Martinus" of Lutheranism, Martin Chemnitz, tried to explain Luther's conduct by stating that when the Zwinglians sought to substantiate their position on Christ's presence only at the right hand of the Father by reference to the Czech Confession of 1506, the Brethren "repetitione et declaratione suae confessionis publice testati sunt, se Lutheri sententiam de coena Domini, ut consentaneam verbo Dei, probare, et a Cinglio dissentire."³⁶ Similarly, Julius Koestlin suggests that despite their somewhat dubious modes of expression, the Brethren were in essential agreement with Luther.³⁷

³³ Cf. Chancellor Gregory Brueck's "Ursachen warumb man sich mit den schwermern nit in verstentnus noch ander handlung zu beschutung des irrsals geben soll," written in November or December of 1529. Brueck feels constrained to reply to the charge that "... haben wir doch derhalben pundtnus mit den, die fur ketzer gehalten sein worden als mit der Chron zu Beheimen," reprinted in Hans von Schubert, *Bekenntnisbildung und Religionspolitik 1529-30 (1524-1534). Untersuchungen und Texte* (Gotha, 1910), p. 145.

³⁴ See Ambrosius Blaurer to the Buergermeister and City Council of Constance, December 18, 1536: "Dr. Luther hat im Jahr 1533 die Rechenschaft des Glaubens der Brueder in Boehmen und Maehren mit seiner Vorrede drucken lassen. Da hoffe ich, er werde auch mit anderen gleiche Geduld haben und, da er die Uebereinstimmung ihres Glaubens von den Sakramenten mit den seinigen zugegeben, obwohl ihre Sprachweise mehr der unsern gleicht, auch gegen uns christliche Liebe zeigen," Traugott Schiess (ed.), *Briefwechsel der Brueder Ambrosius und Thomas Blaurer* (3 vols.; Freiburg, 1908-12), I, 838. Cf. also Ambrosius Blaurer to Heinrich Bullinger, May 23, 1533, *ibid.*, 395-96.

³⁵ *Die letzte Unterredung Luthers mit Melanchthon ueber den Abendmahlstreit* (Goettingen, 1874), pp. 141-47.

³⁶ *Fundamenta Sanae Doctrinae de Vera et Substantiali Praesentia, Exhibitione, et Sumtione Corporis et Sanguinis Domini in Coena* (1569; republished: Frankfort, 1690), p. 102.

³⁷ *The Theology of Luther*, translated by Charles E. Hay (Philadelphia, 1897), II, 192-94.

If there is little difference between Zwingli's view of the Lord's Supper and that of the Brethren, how explain the fact that from the late twenties on Luther consistently condemned the first and tried to sympathize with the second? In 1533, the same year that he published the "Rechenschaft" of the Brethren,³⁸ he wrote to the Protestants in Frankfurt:

Wer seinen seelsorger oeffentlich weis, das er Zwinglisch leret, den sol er meiden und ehe sein lebelang des Sacraments emperen, ehe ers von jm empfahen solt, ja auch ehe drueber sterben und alles leiden.³⁹

And in 1544, only two years after his cordial letter to Augusta,⁴⁰ he wrote his bitter and violent "Kurzes Bekenntnis vom Abendmahl."⁴¹ Luther had objected to some Bohemian formulations as violently as he had to Zwingli's, for he saw their similarity,⁴² but to the formulation in the *Confessio* he did not object.

But that is not because the *Confessio* is completely Lutheran. The Brethren still insisted upon Christ's presence only at the right hand of the Father and quoted the Apostles' Creed to prove their point,⁴³ and they were careful to state very explicitly their rejection of any substantial presence of Christ's body in the Lord's Supper. As will be pointed out presently, their willingness to join with Calvin a few years later also shows that Article XIII of the *Confessio Bohemica* of 1538 is not entirely Lutheran in its doctrine of the Lord's Supper.

The first interpretation referred to above—the agreement of the Brethren and Zwingli—is usually preferred by Reformed interpreters; the second—agreement with Luther—usually by Lutheran interpreters. But both interpretations, as we have seen, involve themselves in historical inexactitudes and inconsistencies.

³⁸ See "Luther's Negotiations," p. 513 f., notes 113–15.

³⁹ "Sendschreiben an die zu Frankfurt a. M." (1533), WA 30-III, 561.

⁴⁰ Luther to Augusta, October 5, 1542, E-K 14, 340.

⁴¹ WA 54, 141–67. Among other things he refers to the Reformed as "Eutychern und Sacramentsschendern," "verfluchte Rotte der Schwermer," says that Zwingli "wird auch gantz und gar zum Heiden" (143), exclaims: "viel lieber, sage ich, wolt ich mich hundert mal lassen zureissen oder verbrennen, ehe ich wolte mit Stenckefeld [sic!], Zwingel, Carlstad, Ecolampad, und wer sie mer sind, die leidigen Schwermer, eins sinnes oder willens sein, oder in jre Lere bewilligen" (144), feeling forced "keines Schwermers . . . gemeinschaft anzunemen, sondern mus weder jre Brieve, Bucher, grus, segen, schrift, namen noch gedechtnis, in meinem hertzen wissen, auch weder sehen noch hoeren" (154).

⁴² See especially "Luther's Negotiations," p. 505, note 54.

⁴³ Article VI of the *Confessio Bohemica* in H. A. Niemeyer (ed.), *Collectio Confessionum in Ecclesiis Reformatis Publicatarum* (Leipzig, 1840), p. 792; the second half of my dissertation on "Luther and the *Confessio Bohemica*" (The Divinity School of the University of Chicago, 1946) is an edition and translation of the *Confessio*, with commentary, including a discussion under Article VI of this problem.

Rather, the solution of the problem of Luther's endorsement of the *Confessio Bohemica* seems to lie in the relationship of three theological trends: the position of the *Confessio*; the position of Martin Bucer, particularly as this was being formulated in the Wittenberg Concord; and the position of John Calvin. It is of more than passing significance that the *Confessio*, the Wittenberg Concord, and the first edition of Calvin's *Institutes* should have appeared within one year of each other. An analysis of Luther's attitude toward the *Confessio* must take account of all three of those trends. For while there is documentary evidence for a study of Luther's attitude toward Bucer, there is little such evidence for his attitude toward Calvin; there is, on the other hand, more material on the Brethren and Calvin than on the Brethren and Bucer.

III

There is a striking similarity between the theological development of the Brethren and that of Martin Bucer, especially in the doctrine of the Lord's Supper and in the effect which that doctrine had on Luther in each case. Like the Brethren, Bucer attempted to occupy a mediating position between Luther and Zwingli.⁴⁴ They, too, had sent legates at the same time to Luther and to the Zwinglians.⁴⁵ The confusion which that action indicates appears also in Bucer; although his view of the Lord's Supper seems to have been very greatly akin to Zwingli's, particularly from 1524 on, he was much more consistent even then in regarding that Sacrament as a means of divine grace.⁴⁶ For our purposes

⁴⁴ "Es hat in Butzer die Neigung gelebt," summarizes a modern interpreter of Bucer's *De regno Christi*, "sich Verhaeltnissen und Menschen anzupassen, mit dem Versuch, ohne von den eigenen Grundsätzen das Wesentliche aufzugeben, das von jenen geforderte anzuerkennen, wenn es seinen Prinzipien nicht voellig entgegengesetzt war": Wilhelm Pauck, *Das Reich Gottes auf Erden*, No. 10 of "Arbeiten zur Kirchengeschichte" (Berlin and Leipzig, 1928), p. 100. He tried such a mediating position at Marburg in 1529 and at Augsburg in 1530: Hastings Eells, "Sacramental Negotiations at the Diet of Augsburg, 1530," *Princeton Theological Review*, 23 (1925), 213-33.

⁴⁵ "... ano i mezi Cvingliany," N. Slanský in Anton Gindely (ed.), *Quellen zur Geschichte der böhmischen Brüder*, No. 19 of "Fontes Rerum Austriacarum" (Vienna, 1859), p. 46.

⁴⁶ August Lang, *Der Evangelienkommentar Martin Butzers und die Grundzüge seiner Theologie* (Leipzig, 1900), pp. 237-50, esp. p. 245 on "ein Hinaustreiben ueber Zwinglis Meinung"; nevertheless, his close relation with Zwingli "haengt . . . aufs innigste mit seinen Grundprinzipien zusammen," p. 250. The selections which Lang offers from Bucer's commentaries on the words of institution bear out his contention that there was vastly more to the man than some of his utterances might indicate; see Appendix 4, pp. 433-35. While emphasizing that in general Bucer "steht . . . Zwingli naeher als Luther" (p. 139), Otto Ritschl gives a similar construction of Bucer's view of the Lord's Supper, *op. cit.*, III, 153-56.

the most important stage in the development of Bucer's doctrine of the Lord's Supper was that which culminated in the Wittenberg Concord of 1536.

In the Wittenberg Concord there was articulated the pro-Lutheran, but still mediating position to which Bucer had come by 1536, and the desire for union which had come upon Luther in the same period.⁴⁷ He gave frequent expression to that desire in prayers like this:

Valete in Christo, et persuadete vobis, quantum in me fuerit, omnia me facturum et passurum fideliter et hilariter, quae ad istam concordiam perficiendam possibilia sunt. Cupio enim (ut antea quoque scripsi) nihil ardentius, quam vitam istam brevi finiendam in pace, charitate, et unitate Spiritus Sancti vobiscum concludere. Christus Jesus, auctor vitae et pacis, conjungat nos Spiritus Sancti sui vinculo in perpetuam unitatem, Amen.⁴⁸

Moved by his conviction that he was soon to die,⁴⁹ Luther was eager for reunion with the alienated Protestants; he was nevertheless suspicious of anything that looked like compromise.⁵⁰

⁴⁷ A thorough analysis of the Wittenberg Concord in terms of the changed political situation by 1536 and of Luther's, Melancthon's, and Bucer's development is still a *summum desideratum*. Much of the material for such a study is conveniently collected in StL 17, 1984–2163. G. Mentz' *Die Wittenberger Artikel von 1536* (Leipzig, 1905) deals specifically with the articles presented to the English delegation and only incidentally with the Concord. The only volume I know of devoted to the Concord is G. Goeszwein's *Eine Union in der Wahrheit* (Saint Louis, 1886), but his historical interpretations are strongly influenced by his theological views, as, e.g., on pp. 162–64; the same holds true of the analysis of Heinrich Schmid, *Der Kampf der lutherischen Kirche um Luthers Lehre vom Abendmahl im Reformationszeitalter* (Leipzig, 1873), Ch. I, pp. 8–55; somewhat subject to the same criticism, but historically more accurate is Koestlin, *Theology of Luther*, II, 155–82. Probably the best treatment, though written chiefly from Bucer's point of view, is in Chapters XX–XXI of Hastings Eells, *Martin Bucer* (New Haven, 1931), pp. 190–224, and notes on pp. 471–77; cf. also Lang, *op. cit.*, pp. 269–82, and Otto Ritschl, *op. cit.*, III, 154–56.

⁴⁸ Luther to the clergy in Augsburg, October 5, 1535, E-K 10, 239–40; see also Luther to Bucer, January 22, 1531: "Dominus Jesus illuminet nos, et concordet perfecte faciat, hoc oro, hoc ploro," E-K 8, 351; Luther to the clergy in Augsburg, July 20, 1535, E-K 10, 177–78; Luther to the clergy in Strassburg, October 5, 1535, E-K 10, 237; Luther to Gereon Seiler, October 5, 1535, E-K 10, 241.

⁴⁹ "... mortem meam, quam non longe abesse et arbitror et spero," Luther to the clergy in Ulm, October 5, 1535, E-K 10, 243; "cupio ante finem hujus vitae meae redditam pacem ecclesiae," Luther to Martin Schelling, November 27, 1535, E-K 10, 272; Luther to the clergy in Strassburg, November 27, 1535, E-K 10, 273.

⁵⁰ Luther to Bucer, January 22, 1531, E-K 8, 349–50; Luther to Melancthon, December 17, 1534, E-K 10, 92–94 (if it is genuine, this is a significant document for Luther's relations with Bucer). Significantly, Luther felt compelled to defend himself against the charge of having compromised in the Wittenberg Concord; see his letter to the Buergermeister and City Council of Isny, December 26, 1536, StL 17, 2138.

In addition to this general tone, there are certain specific factors in the formulation of the Wittenberg Concord which form an interesting parallel to those involved in Luther's dealings with the Bohemian Brethren. One of them was his high personal regard for Bucer,⁵¹ despite the latter's having tampered with Lutheran books in translation⁵² and despite the appearance of a preface by Bucer to a collection of Zwingli's letters published while negotiations were going on.⁵³ As with the *Confessio*, so with the Concord, the problem of logomachy entered in. Several times Bucer had suggested that perhaps the controversy was at least partly about mere words—a suggestion that Luther violently denied;⁵⁴ after the discussions, however, Luther, too, granted that it is not necessary that parties be united in their mode of expression.⁵⁵ Again, he was more kindly disposed toward Bucer and his supporters because they had declared themselves in agreement with the Augsburg Confession and the Apology thereof⁵⁶ and because they admitted the error of their previous ways.⁵⁷

⁵¹ He wrote to Bucer as to "Venerabili in Christo viro, D. Martino Bucero, ministro Christi fideli, suo fratri charissimo," March 25, 1536, *E-K* 10, 312; this opinion was shared by Justus Jonas, as evidenced by his letter to the clergy in Augsburg, July 19, 1535, *StL* 17, 2067.

⁵² Eells, *Bucer*, pp. 76–81.

⁵³ Cf. Friedrich Myconius' report of Luther's disappointment at this, *StL* 17, 2092–93, and Bernardi's report (1536) of Bucer's explanation that this was done contrary to his will, *ibid.*, 2104–05. Bucer had previously sought to excuse Zwingli: letter to G. Brueck, July, 1530, *StL* 17, 1986; and Luther had been surprised that Bucer's mediating position had conciliated Zwingli and Oecolampadius: letter to Bucer, January 22, 1531, *E-K* 8, 349–50. Cf. Eells, *Bucer*, pp. 193–94.

⁵⁴ Luther to Duke Ernest of Braunschweig-Lueneburg, February 1, 1531, *Werke* (Erlangen edition, hereafter abbreviated as *EA*) 54, 212 f.; Bernardi's report (1536) of Luther's answer to the charge of logomachy, *StL* 17, 2103, and Bucer's discussion of the "tropus," *ibid.*, 2106–07. See Eells, "Sacramental Negotiations at the Diet of Augsburg," p. 218.

⁵⁵ Luther to the Swiss cities, December 1, 1537, *EA* 55, 190; cf. Melanchthon's conviction that the parties were united "in re," letter to Urbanus Rhegius, *Corpus Reformatorum* 2, 843.

⁵⁶ Elector John Frederick had demanded that such be the terms in a letter to Luther, May 14, 1536, *E-K* 10, 334, and in an undated letter to Brueck, *StL* 17, 2087. Bucer's declaration of his agreement with the Confession and the Apology was enough to satisfy Melanchthon, their author: letter to Agricola, February, 1535, *Corpus* 2, 827; and the very conservative Myconius was also satisfied by that subscription, "Bericht," *StL* 17, 2086–87, 2097. Both the clergy of Ulm in their letter to Luther of October 31, 1536, *E-K* 11, 112, and the members of the Strassburg ministerium in their letter of January 18, 1537, *E-K* 11, 179, made their agreement with the Confession and Apology quite explicit.

⁵⁷ Bucer admitted that he had previously been unclear on many aspects of the question: Myconius, *StL* 17, 2096; and Bernardi, *StL* 17, 2105. On Bucer's *Retractationes*, cf. Bucer to Luther, July 21, 1536, *E-K* 11, 7.

But the principal aspect of Bucer's thought was his insistence — despite their difference on the nature of Christ's presence in the Sacrament — that the Lord's Supper is, in the terminology of present-day theology, a "Gabe" of God, not an "Aufgabe" of man. In a treatise addressed to the Czechs, Luther had branded as "der aller schedlichst und aller ketzrischt" misinterpretation of the Lord's Supper not a refusal to agree on the nature of Christ's presence, but regarding the Supper as "eyn opffer und gutt werck."⁵⁸ Already in 1531 Luther was glad that Bucer saw the Sacrament as a food for the soul;⁵⁹ and in 1535–36 Bucer's party continually emphasized that a valid sacrament is dependent not upon man, but upon God, who through Christ is given in the Sacrament.⁶⁰ When, finally, even Johann Brenz was convinced and satisfied,⁶¹ it was clear that, at least for the moment, the union was acceptable; and so, in Eells' words, "the Lord's Supper was administered, and . . . there was certainly a miracle of Christian love when Zwinglians and Lutherans ate and drank together of the body and blood of the Lord."⁶²

Now, the Wittenberg Concord is important for the purposes of this study for at least two reasons. For one thing, it illustrates Luther's attitude toward those who differed with him at the time when he was considering the *Confessio Bohemica*. Hence, Luther's treatment of the Concord, perhaps more than any of his other contacts, helps explain his endorsement of the *Confessio*.⁶³ But the Concord is important for another reason as well: it helps explain the relationship of Luther and Calvin. And since the Brethren dealt extensively with Calvin, but not with Bucer,

⁵⁸ "Von Anbeten" (1523), WA 11, 441. For an interpretation of this moment in Lutheranism, as contrasted with Calvinism, see Friedrich Wilhelm Hopf, "Die Abendmahlslehre der evangelisch-lutherischen Kirche," *Abendmahlsgemeinschaft?* (Muenchen, 1937), pp. 159–60.

⁵⁹ Luther to Bucer, January 22, 1541, E-K 8, 349.

⁶⁰ Strassburg theologians to Luther, August 19, 1535, E-K 10, 195; "channel of grace" in Myconius' "Bericht," StL 17, 2105; Bucer, *Corpus Reformatorium* 3, 78; Gereon to Luther, September 8, 1535, E-K 10, 219.

⁶¹ Cf. Strassburg theologians to Luther, August 19, 1535, E-K 10, 194, and Julius Hartmann, *Johannes Brenz* (Elberfeld, 1862), pp. 159–60.

⁶² Martin Bucer, p. 202.

⁶³ This parallel has been pointed out from two vastly different quarters. After citing the Concord as proof of Luther's position, Friedrich Loofs continues: "Auch gegenueber den dem Evangelium entgegenkommenden boehmischen Bruedern zeigte Luther 1533 und 1538, dass er die seiner Meinung nach noetige Uebereinstimmung in der doctrina fidei unabhaengig wusste von der 'Weise zu reden,'" *Leitfaden zum Studium der Dogmengeschichte* (4th ed.; Halle, 1906), p. 841. Similarly, Theodore Graebner, "The Historic Lutheran Position in Non-Fundamentals" (Saint Louis, 1939), pp. 8–9.

Calvin's doctrine of the Lord's Supper, as laid down in the 1536 edition of his *Institutes*, needs to be examined for the light it sheds on Luther's attitude toward the *Confessio Bohemica*.⁶⁴

Luther's doctrine of the real presence, it must be remembered, is to be interpreted in the light not so much of his Christology as of his doctrine of the Holy Spirit.⁶⁵ So it is, too, with Calvin, as is evidenced by the fact that the chapter "De Sacramentis" in his *Institutes* follows immediately upon the stirring words:

Non enim levibus experimentis suos probat Dominus, nec molliter exercet, sed in extrema quaeque saepe adigit, et adactos diu in eo luto haerere sint, antequam gustum suae dulcedinis aliquem illis praebeat, atque (ut ait Hanna) mortificat et vivificat, deducit ad infernos et reducit. Quid his possent, nisi liqui animis et in desperationem ruere, nisi afflicto, desolatos et iam semimortuos haec cogitatio erigeret: se a Deo respici et finem praesentibus malis affore? ⁶⁶

As a means towards granting that "gustum suae dulcedinis," God has provided the Sacraments. Their purpose is "ut fidei nostrae

⁶⁴ Calvin-research in general, as also on the Lord's Supper, has been divided on the relation between the two Reformers; cf. Erwin Muehlhaupt, *Die Predigt Calvins*, No. 18 of "Arbeiten zur Kirchengeschichte" (Berlin and Leipzig, 1931), pp. viii-ix and 167-68, as well as the detailed review of "Thirty Years of Calvin Study" by John T. McNeill in *Church History*, XVII (1948), 207-40, esp. the discussion of Calvin's doctrine of the Sacraments, pp. 230-31. So, for example, Otto Ritschl feels that in his doctrine of the Sacraments Calvin "ist . . . im allgemeinen jedoch mehr Zwingli als Luther gefolgt," *op. cit.*, III, 229-30; but the whole presentation, pp. 229-42, and especially the discussion of Calvin's relation to Luther, pp. 235-42, does not seem to bear out that contention. In a presentation of *Calvins Lehre vom Abendmahl* (2d ed.; Muenchen, 1935), Wilhelm Niesel seeks to demonstrate a similarity between Luther and Calvin in their doctrine of the Lord's Supper; unfortunately he obscures the valid point he is making with regard to the young Calvin by his uncritical identification of Calvin's earlier and later views. Following Niesel, for reasons other than historical, is Walther von Loewenich, *Vom Abendmahl Christi* (Berlin, 1938), pp. 90-98, especially the summary points, pp. 93-95; the late M. Reu's objections to Loewenich, *Can We Still Hold to the Lutheran Doctrine of the Lord's Supper?* (Columbus, 1941), pp. 81-82, are not on historical grounds, either. The entire problem of Calvin's relation to Luther, on which the last word has not yet been spoken, has been beclouded by later controversies between the Lutheran and the Reformed Churches not necessarily germane to that relation, and especially by the fact that the singularly unspeculative presentation in the *Institutes* of 1536 has too often been interpreted by foe and friend alike on the basis of Calvin's later, less evangelical viewpoints.

⁶⁵ It is the merit of Helmut Gollwitzer's treatments of Luther's doctrine of the Lord's Supper that they have called attention to this basic fact, often forgotten or neglected; see "Luthers Abendmahlslehre" in *Abendmahlsgemeinschaft?* pp. 94-121, esp. p. 101, and the many references in his stimulating and learned *Coena Domini* (Muenchen, 1937).

⁶⁶ "Institutiones religionis christianae" (1536), *Corpus Reformatorum* 29, 101; the entire passage could have been penned by the young Luther. On this activity of God and the Holy Spirit, see his sermon, *ibid.*, 77, 789.

serviant, nempe ut alant ipsam, exerçant, augeant."⁶⁷ Calvin insisted that to accomplish this, Christ's body and blood "vere et efficaciter exhiberi, non autem naturaliter."⁶⁸ Important here is the "efficaciter," for a fear of blaspheming the body of Christ has often kept men from communing. But when that happened, men were placing the responsibility for the effectiveness of Christ's presence into their own hands, instead of leaving it in God's hands, where alone the entire matter has meaning.⁶⁹

Because of this basic orientation concerning the Sacraments, Calvin was unable to accept Zwingli's formulations, which he regarded as profane. But it is interesting as well as highly significant that Calvin found an affinity in Bucer and in the Wittenberg Concord.⁷⁰ It was to Bucer, in turn, that Luther addressed his highly controverted words: "salutabis Dr. Johannem Sturmium et Joh. Calvinum reverenter, quorum libellos singulari voluptate legi."⁷¹ Luther may well have been referring to Calvin's *Institutes*, though this is not sure.⁷² If so, then Luther must have seen, and correctly, that Calvin's doctrine of the Lord's Supper was close to that of the Wittenberg Concord and to that of the Bohemian Brethren, both of which he had approved. Calvin, Bucer, and the Brethren were considerably closer to Luther than to Zwingli, despite their formulations; therefore, Luther could, and did, deal with them approvingly.⁷³

⁶⁷ *Corpus* 29, 103. The Lord's Supper "non perfectis institutum est, sed infirmis ac debilibus, ad vellicandum, excitandum, stimulandum, exercendum fidei et caritatis defectum," *ibid.*, p. 129; cf. Calvin's sermon comparing the Sacraments to God's gift of sunshine, *Corpus* 74, 98.

⁶⁸ *Corpus* 29, 123: "non substantiam ipsam corporis, seu verum et naturale Christi corpus illic dari: sed omnia, quae in suo corpore nobis beneficia Christus praestitit."

⁶⁹ "Nam si hoc agitur, ut nostram a nobis dignitatem petamus, actum de nobis est. Ruina tantum et confusio nos manent" is his terse analysis, *Corpus* 29, 128.

⁷⁰ Cf. the brief account in August Lang, *Johannes Calvin*, No. 99 of "Schriften des Vereins fuer Reformationsgeschichte" (Leipzig, 1909), p. 211.

⁷¹ Luther to Bucer, October 14, 1539, E-K 12, 260.

⁷² Diestelmann, *op. cit.*, p. 320, note 1, feels confident that it was indeed the *Institutes* to which he was referring; because of the reference to Sadoletus in the following sentence, Gustav Kawerau takes the words as a reference to Calvin's reply to Sadoletus (1539: *Corpus* 33, 385 ff.), E-K 12, 261. One cannot resist the feeling that if any books by Calvin were to come to Luther, the *Institutes* would be among them; certainly "libellos" could include both the reply to Sadoletus and the *Institutes* of 1536.

⁷³ Reinhold Seeberg has formulated the issue thus: "Fragt man aber, ob Calvins Lehre Luther oder Zwingli naeher steht, so wird im konfessionellen Interesse in der Regel zugunsten letzterer Moeglichkeit entschieden. Beachtet man jedoch, dasz gegenueber der rein subjektiv

Luther's opposition to Zwingli's view concerning Christ's presence in the Lord's Supper had been chiefly on two scores: Zwingli's moralism and his rationalism.⁷⁴ That moralism and rationalism had manifested themselves in the denial of the presence of Christ as it was taught by the New Testament. Zwingli was, therefore, among those "die also sicher daher faren und speyen eraus alles, was yhn yns maul fellet, und sehen nicht zuvor einen gedanken zehen mal an, ob er auch recht sey fur Gott."⁷⁵ He was no longer a weak brother to be tolerated and exhorted.⁷⁶ But so long as anyone was willing to bend his reason to the Word and to acknowledge the Lord's Supper as the gift of the presence of the living Christ, Luther accepted him in Christian fellowship.

This the Brethren were willing to do. Convinced that they put the Word above their own reason and that they believed in the givenness of the living Christ in the Sacrament, Luther acknowledged the spiritual descendants of John Hus, the Bohemian Brethren, as his brethren. He did so publicly in 1538, when he endorsed the *Confessio Bohemica* of 1535.

rememorativen Auffassung Zwinglis Calvin sowohl eine besondere praesentia vivi Christi als die durch dieselbe verursachten religioesen Wirkungen in der Weise Luthers annimmt, so wird man — unter Wahrung der festgestellten Differenz — doch urteilen duerfen, dasz in dem religioesen Verstaendnis des Sakraments Calvin Luther viel naecher als Zwingli steht," *Lehrbuch der Dogmengeschichte*, IV-2, 607—08. For a strong presentation of the other view, see Schmid, *op. cit.*, pp. 136—38.

⁷⁴ Cf. Loewenich, *op. cit.*, p. 87. But because of his theological purpose, Loewenich seems to me to ignore the fact that what Zwingli denied because of his moralism and rationalism was the presence of Christ in the Lord's Supper, and that, as a result, Luther's conception of Christ as present "vere et efficaciter," as Calvin put it, cannot be dismissed as simply as Loewenich tries to do.

⁷⁵ "Das diese wort Christi (Das ist mein leib etce) noch fest stehen widder die Schwermegester" (1527), WA 23, 71.

⁷⁶ Cf. the passage cited in "Luther's Negotiations," p. 501, note 30.

Homiletics

A Series of Sermon Studies for the Church Year

FIRST SUNDAY IN ADVENT

MATT. 18: 18-20

The Text and the Day. — This text has no immediate relation to the general thoughts of Advent but concerns itself specifically with the new church year. Its emphasis on the forgiveness of sins, the answers of the Father to the Christians' prayers of trust, and the continuous teaching ministry of our Lord in His Church, attach directly to the Epistle, Collect, and Introit.

Notes on Meaning. — V. 18 repeats the mandate given in Matt. 16: 19 and John 20: 23. Apparently the Savior continually instructed the disciples as to the nature of the Christian Church — a tool by which men might be loosed from their sins in the name of God, or by which, if they by unbelief rejected its message, their separation from God would be made the more apparent. The Christian Church preaches Law and Gospel: the Law as the diagnosis of man's plight in being separated from God; the Gospel as the announcement that God Himself in Christ Jesus reaches across the gap and looses men from the bonds of sin. — Many people, even Christians, are shocked by the phrase of a Christian pastor or layman, "I forgive you your sins." This text provides opportunity to make clear that the Christian, through his witness to Christ, actually frees man from sin, is the tool by which God Himself brings the heavenly rescue. — Note context of this verse: the procedure in the church by which the spiritual life of members is strengthened through personal admonition and by which the spiritual death of those outward members of the church in whom the Spirit has ceased to function is declared in a new impulse given for commencing the work of salvage from the beginning.

The disciples had been suffering from a power complex; cf. ch. 17: 17-27; 18: 1-14. Hence the Savior is anxious to make clear that this task of binding and loosing does not depend on power and numbers. Two people constitute the Church (v. 17), that is to say, an organism in which one man takes up responsibility for the spiritual life of another and in which in-

dividuals are together members of the body of Christ. Cf. 1 Corinthians 12; Eph. 3:14-19; 4:11-16. The Savior also emphasizes with v. 19 that evangelism and church discipline are not processes for the enhancing of prestige, but that they represent the yearning and prayerful desire of Christians to draw upon the power of God in heaven to carry out His great purposes through them.

V. 20 is a general principle of which vv. 18 and 19 give one application. It states the principle of the Church (cf. parallels above). A church is not a list or assortment of people, but it is people, even if only two or three, gathered in Jesus' name, that is, gathering because of what Jesus Christ means to them as Savior and Lord, strengthening that meaning in their hearts through His presence, and carrying out the purposes for which He has redeemed them and imparted Himself to them. Cf. Matt. 28:19; Luke 24:47; John 20:22. Christians gather together for worship to Christ, for witness to Christ, for fellowship in Christ, for mutual strengthening and upbuilding to Christ.

Preaching Pitfalls. — The sermon will be preached to refresh in the hearers' minds the nature and purpose of the Christian congregation. It will be important not to leave the impression that only a parish in its worship services or voters' assemblies is described in the text; the text applies also to the "church in the house"; Rom. 16:5; 1 Cor. 16:19; Col. 4:15; Philemon 2.

Problem and Goal. — The shortcomings of the hearer to be analyzed in this sermon are a deficient understanding of the church and its life together, a readiness to think of it merely as ritual or fleshly fellowship under religious guise; an apathy toward Word and Sacrament as the central operation of God both to the church itself and to those outside; a reluctance to undertake the tasks of personal witness in and through the church. The goal is to refresh in the hearer's mind and will the nature of his relation to his parish in the coming twelve months of worship and church activity and to make the forgiveness of sins central in his faith and task.

Illustrations. — The text emphasizes the ministerial quality of the church — it does a job for God and people. A host of analogies present themselves: the mother providing meals for the family, for all the members of the family who will eat, for no member of the family who refuses to eat; the mother

constructs a setting at mealtime favorable for good eating; father and mother work together in special ways for making each meal possible. — The prayerful attitude (v. 19) is not a matter of the mouth speaking prayers or of the heart listing desires, but of the total Christian reaching out to God for the one help to the problem. Brother and sister in the family may have selfish desires which run counter to the interests of the total family; but when they agree on a matter and come to their parents with it, we are quite probably observing a family need and the desire to remedy it.

Outline:

THE CHURCH'S PROGRAM FOR ANOTHER YEAR
OF WORSHIP AND WORK

- I. The Church's business.
 - A. To bring the forgiveness of sins to people.
 - B. This implies making clear the deadliness of unbelief.
 - C. But it likewise implies the absorption in witnessing to our salvation in Jesus Christ.
- II. The Church's nature.
 - A. What is this mighty organization that can represent God?
 - B. It is simply people (even two or three) who are together and who are for each other.
- III. The Church's confidence.
 - A. God Himself guarantees to answer the Church's prayers.
 - B. Christ Himself is in the Church's midst.

RICHARD R. CAEMMERER

SECOND SUNDAY IN ADVENT

LUKE 12:35-48

The Text and the Day. — During the season of Advent (coming) we think of the Lord's coming into the flesh as the Savior of the world and also of His coming to Judgment. The Introit and the Collect of this day refer to the first and the Gradual to the second coming. Christ's first coming should prepare us for the second coming.

Notes on Meanings. — The Lord had given the admonition not to provide for ourselves treasures on this earth, but rather "a treasure in the heavens that faileth not" (v. 33). This admonition is given also in view of the Lord's return to Judgment, in order that we be prepared to meet Him. "Let your loins be girded about" (v. 35) by taking up the lower part of the loose garment into the girdle, as was done when people were about to work or travel (Acts 12:8; 2 Kings 4:29). "Lights burning" (v. 35; Matt. 25:1). Those are prepared who are found in true faith in their Savior. — Ready to "open unto Him immediately" (v. 36); not as some people who are satisfied with the "cleanliness" and "orderliness" in their home, but do not like to entertain visitors before first putting everything into better condition. Christians should always so live that they are ready at any day to meet their Lord; they do not and cannot know the time of His coming (vv. 38-40); He will come as a thief in the night (v. 39; 1 Pet. 3:10; 1 Thess. 5:1-2). In other words, Christians should be faithful servants, showing forth their faith also by their good works, being always conscious of their duties, responsibilities, and opportunities (vv. 41-46). Fidelity and wisdom should be found in a faithful servant (v. 42) in order that he might be a faithful steward. If not found so, the servant will be cut "asunder" (v. 46, Heb. 11:37; 1 Sam. 16:33). — Punishment will be meted out according to the servant's knowledge and opportunity (vv. 47-48). There will be degrees of punishment in hell, punishment well deserved. God will acknowledge the faithfulness of His servant (v. 37). The faithful servant will enter into eternal salvation, and even there, there will be degrees of glory, given not according to merit, but by grace (vv. 37, 42; Rev. 3:21; Luke 18:14; John 13:4-5; Dan. 12:3).

Preaching Pitfalls. The preacher should be careful not to speak of faithfulness apart from faith; faithfulness is the result of faith. Those who are found in faith, knowing and acknowledging their sins and finding comfort in God's grace, given in Christ Jesus, have full and free forgiveness; these are the ones whose loins are girded about and whose lights are burning. These, then, also will be faithful in serving the Lord. While justification is 100 per cent perfect, because it is what God does, our sanctification, because of our sinful flesh, the world, and the devil, is yet very imperfect, and therefore we need

to be continually admonished and encouraged by the mercies of God to present our bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God (Rom. 12:1).

Preaching Emphases. — The Lord will return to Judgment. No one can know when. We should be ready in true faith to receive Him immediately, by faithful stewardship. Punishment for the unfaithful and gracious reward for the faithful.

Problem and Goal. — Because we are living in a world given to materialism and because there is indifferentism to doctrine and a godly life even among people calling themselves Christians, we must seek to arouse our Christian people to be aware of all of these conditions, examine themselves, and, by the grace of God, believe right and live right.

Outline:

For an introductory thought see the "Text and the Day."

**WHO IS THAT SERVANT WHO IS READY TO MEET
HIS LORD COMING TO JUDGMENT?**

- I. He who is aware that the Lord will come, but knows not when (vv. 36, 38-40).
- II. He who is found in true faith (v. 35).
- III. He who is faithful in the performance of his duties in accordance with his endowments and opportunities (vv. 41-46).
- IV. He who is not looking for a deserved, but merely for a gracious reward (vv. 37, 42, 47, 48).

JOHN H. C. FRITZ

THIRD SUNDAY IN ADVENT

LUKE 3:3-14

The Text and the Day. — The coming of the Kingdom and the necessity and method of preparing for it are the heart of this Gospel. That makes clear its relevance to the Advent season, which calls upon God's children to prepare also for the coming of their King on Christmas Day.

Notes on Meaning. — Preliminary (vv. 1-3). It may strike us as strange that Luke in these verses notes in such detail the exact time when John began his ministry; but only if we

forget of what paramount importance the coming of God's kingdom was and is to the world.

And it is well to remember in connection with the tremendous importance of the preaching of John that that preaching and its timing was not of John but of God: "*The Word of God came unto John, the son of Zacharias, in the wilderness.*"

Vv. 4-6. This event was long ago foretold in the poetic language of Isaiah, alluding, perhaps, to the preparations made for the triumphant entrances of ancient kings. His poetic language should not be scrutinized for details to be spiritualized. It is to impress us profoundly with the necessity of removing every hindrance to the coming of the King.

Vv. 7-9. John preached a Baptism of repentance, and so the multitude by coming to his Baptism signified that it felt the need of repentance. But what about the motive and character of their repentance? "Who hath warned you to flee from the Wrath to Come?" In other words, what prompts your repentance? John is concerned about a really thorough-going change of heart, one reflected in a fundamental change of conduct.

He anticipates the ready desire of the soul to by-pass a radical change of heart and life by appealing to an external status. But John insists: "Begin not to say within yourselves, We have Abraham to our Father; for I say unto you that God is able of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham." People who rest secure on external relations are spiritually dead, as dead as stones, and unless they repent, God will replace them by such as are real children of His. The reluctance of all of us to renew our lives and, instead, to seek security in externals is a readily discernible application of this part of the text.

The urgency of this radical change of heart and conduct is dramatically pictured by an ax already lying with its sharp edge against the root of a tree. He who yields the ax is watching, and woe to the tree that does not bring forth good fruit!

Vv. 10-14. The Spirit-given power of John's message is evidenced by the response of his hearers: What shall we do? He shattered every false hope, and they are shaken to the core. His answer strikes at sin, the basic root of all evil; at selfishness, as evidenced in a lack of charity; at greediness, which leads to dishonesty and cruelty; at discontent with one's earthly

lot and reward. How applicable the image at the present time to the heartlessness of the rich, the dishonesty of the bureaucrats, the discontent of labor, in brief, the rampant materialism of this generation.

Preaching Pitfalls. — There is, on the one hand, a danger of dulling the effects of Johns' hammer blows in an excessive fear lest people trust in their works for salvation; there is, on the other hand, the danger of so treating the text that the hearers are deprived of the comfort of salvation by grace. The solution lies in emphasizing that the King who is coming will so deal with repentant hearts that by His forgiveness and His power changed lives will be effected if His entrance is not resisted.

Problem and Goal. — The right preparation for Christmas is spiritual and consists in the recognition of one's depravity and helplessness as well as the recognition of God's free and full forgiveness for the Redeemer's sake. Such a real and vital faith will and must be evidenced by a changed life.

Outline:

TRUE REPENTANCE

I. What is it?

A. It consists in casting one's self completely on the Lord.

1. Not on self (v. 8).

2. But on God (vv. 4, 6).

B. It issues in a complete renewal of life.

1. Every living thing must produce (v. 9).

2. In every area of life (vv. 4, 6).

II. Why it is important.

A. Without it man is doomed (v. 9).

B. With it man is saved (v. 6).

WALTER O. SPECKHARD

FOURTH SUNDAY IN ADVENT

JOHN 3:27-30

The Text and the Day. — This last Sunday before Christmas was known in ancient days as the Preparation. Its foremost purpose was to answer the question: "O Lord, how shall

I meet Thee, how welcome Thee aright?" In answer, the Epistle issues the call for joy, gentleness, prayer, and thanksgiving. The Gospel, on the other hand, stresses John the Baptist's rare humility and self-effacement. All this is beautifully brought together in our text as the true preparation for Christmas.

Notes on Meaning. — To the great surprise of his followers the Baptist remains undisturbed at the report of Jesus' success, not only accepting the situation in all meekness, but actually defending the activities of Jesus. In v. 27 he states a truth expressed in more detail by Gamaliel (Acts 5: 38-39). — Our modern "best man" may not be an exact counterpart of the Jewish friend of the bridegroom, yet the application is very apt. It is the former's duty to minister to the comfort and happiness of the groom and not become jealous nor seek to usurp the limelight. So today pastor and people should exalt Christ. — The "must" in v. 30 is that of divine necessity originating in God's will and purpose. The expression "no man" is relative; there were exceptions then, including the speaker. V. 33: By believing, the individual Christian confesses before the world that God is true in His words, ways, and promises, though these may often transcend human comprehension. V. 34: John's meaning is that God granted the gift of His faith-creating Spirit through the preaching of Jesus, not out of a measure. Hence also for us the Word is the God-ordained vehicle of the Holy Spirit into the hearts of men, and we should proclaim it faithfully. V. 36: God's verdict is already in force: The believer has life *now*, the unbeliever is under God's wrath *now*. See v. 18.

Preaching Pitfalls. — Since this text is so rich in content, the preacher will do well to stay close to the points mentioned in the first paragraph and not enter upon a lengthy discussion and application of the additional material found in vv. 31-36, except to stress the deity of Christ at the appropriate place as well as the fact that God's verdict has already been pronounced (v. 36).

Preaching Emphases. — The chief stress should be placed upon John the Baptist's correct appraisal of the Christ, which led to his selfless humility as well as to his great joy. John's willingness to step aside looms all the greater when we remember that he was then in the prime of life and at the

apex of his career, a man whose coming was foretold by the Prophets, who entered the world in miracle fashion, to whom even the Sanhedrin felt constrained to send a delegation. These facts should be brought out forcefully.

Outline:

THE SECRET OF TRUE CHRISTMAS JOY

It consists:

- I. In accepting and confessing Jesus as the God-sent Redeemer.
- II. In bowing in willing contentment to His authority in all things.

I

- A. The text story, together with John's confession (v. 28).
 1. This conviction concerning Jesus had been created early in his life and sealed by God's testimony at Jesus' Baptism.
 2. The knowledge that he was serving the very Christ of God, his own personal Savior (cf. Matt. 3:14), gave him enduring incentive and joy (v. 29 b).
- B. We, pastors and people, can have true Christmas joy only when we share John's conviction. All other views concerning Jesus and the Scriptures are insufficient and unable to impart true and lasting joy.

II

- A. True joy is preserved and enhanced only when accompanied by willing contentment to bow to Christ's authority:
 1. The temptation to jealousy and resentment was strong. The homage of all Israel was his for the taking, as the sending of a delegation by the Sanhedrin shows.
 2. But in spite of his greatness (Matt. 11:11) the Baptist was willing to step aside and let his Lord increase (vv. 29-30).
- B. If we would possess lasting joy, we must be willing to decrease by banishing all thought of personal worthiness, confessing Christ before men, bringing every thought in subjection to the obedience of

Christ, placing ourselves and our talents into His service, striving for growth in daily sanctification, un murmuring submission in time of trouble and affliction. Refusal to do these things will drive peace and joy from the heart.

- C. All depends on the right relation to Christ (v. 36). May we by God's grace decrease and pray Him to let Christ increase in and through us.

OTTO E. SOHN

CHRISTMAS DAY

JOHN 1:1-14

The Text and the Day. — The text presents the story of the Christmas Gospel and Epistle from the viewpoint of eternity. "A Child is born," "Unto you is born." Text: "The Word was made flesh." — "Unto us," "Unto you," "To all men." Text: "Lighteth every man that cometh into the world." — "Wonderful," "The glory of the Lord." Text: "We beheld His glory." — "His name shall be . . . the mighty God," "The great God and our Savior, Jesus Christ," "Christ the Lord." Text: "The Word was God."

Notes on Meaning. — The magnitude of the message is emphasized by the many independent sentences. Vv. 1-5 use only *kai*; not until v. 7 is there a *hina*, and no *de* until v. 12. "In the beginning": from eternity; before there was a beginning. "The Word": the personal Word. As we make our inner life known through our words, the Word, Jesus Christ, became the direct revelation of God to men (Matt. 11:27). "The Word was with God, and the Word was God." Cf. the explanation to the Second Article of the Creed: "true God, begotten of the Father from eternity." Jesus Christ revealed Himself as the mighty God through the work of creation (Ps. 33:6; Col. 1:16; Heb. 1:10). Not only is He Life Himself (Col. 3:4), but He also imparts life (John 11:25). He is the Light of the world (John 8:12) — a transition of thought. Light not only fosters life, but it gives guidance and direction. It reveals itself and all illuminated by its rays (Ps. 36:9). Light points to the purity and sinlessness of Christ. Christ showed Himself as the Light of the world through the Old Testament Prophets, who had John as their foremost representative.

Christ Himself was the full Revelation. He was in the world throughout the Old Testament period, but even in those early days they knew Him not (Gen. 6:5; Ex. 5:2; Dan. 3:15 b. "His own" were the Jews). "He gave power" — it is the gift of God that people are saved. In every age of the world justification is by grace, through faith. Cf. "As many as received Him," "That believed on His name." "Sons of God" refers to our regeneration. It is entirely by the grace of God. "Flesh" is the human nature of Christ according to His body and soul (1 Tim. 3:16; 1 John 4:2). In His incarnation Christ showed His grace; proved the truth of all Old Testament prophecy, and revealed the absolute truth of God. "His glory" includes all the attributes of God.

Preaching Pitfalls. — A philosophical dissertation on the *Logos* will bring little edification to the hearers in a Christmas service. Care should be taken not to lose oneself in the many short sentences; they rather trace the glory of the Son of God from eternity through creation and Old Testament revelation to the climax of His incarnation.

Preaching Emphases. — The sermon should stress the glory of our Savior. Frequent reference can be made to Is. 9:6 and the Christmas Gospel. The entire text is held on a very high plane, which should be reflected in the sermon. "Glory to God in the highest!"

Problem and Goal. — The glory of the Christ Child in all His grace and truth is to be presented with such appeal that the hearers lay hold on salvation and deny ungodliness and "live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world." The preacher must himself be filled with joy and thanksgiving at God's gift (John 3:16) and impart the same to his hearers.

Illustrations. — Before there was life on earth, God gave light; so before there could be spiritual life in us, God gave the Light of the world. — As the conception and birth of Christ was a miracle, so is our regeneration. It is not by the will of man.

Outline:

THE GLORY OF THE CHRIST CHILD

- I. The glory of His divine power (vv. 1-4 a).
 - A. His eternal Godhead.
 - B. His almighty power.

- II. The glory of His divine revelation (vv. 4 b-11, 14 a).
 - A. The manner of His revelation: theophanies in Old Testament; through the Prophets and John; and His life on earth.
 - B. The extent of His revelation: "The Light of men," "in the world," "He came unto His own."
- III. The glory of His divine grace (vv. 12-14).
 - A. He gave power to become the sons of God.
 - B. He dwelt among us.
 - C. He imparts divine truth.

VICTOR MENNICKE

NEW YEAR'S DAY

MATT. 28: 20 b

The Text and the Day. — There is no Introit provided for New Year's Eve, but the Introit for a Day of Humiliation and Prayer would be very suitable. It presents more than a superficial look into the past with the assurance of God's never-failing mercy, and this mercy of God in turn gives us the strongest possible hope for the future. The Collect can either come from the same source as the Introit, or the special Collect for New Year's Eve, given in the agenda, would be equally suitable. The lections can be found in the hymnal, page 156, and carry the theme of the occasion in a most forceful way. The Epistle, which presents a striking contrast between the transitoriness of all human life and the enduring quality of the Word of the Lord, the Gospel preached to the people, and the Gospel lesson which emphasizes the long-suffering of God with its ever giving man one more chance: both create an atmosphere in which the Christian soul must dwell for its salvation.

Notes on Meaning. — The text itself is very clear. Whatever else it may do, with the exclamation "lo" it fastens the attention on Christ. Christ Himself, now the glorified and risen Lord, who has finished man's salvation and conquered sin, death, and the devil, this very Christ, the God-Man, He will be with us alway, all the days, until the consummation of the eon. This passage of time, which the numbering of the years emphasizes and which the passing of the years solemnly

tolls into our very being, will not go on endlessly. It will all reach its consummation when men will no more act and live as they do now. But during all the days and years that it does go on, Christ will be with us. Certainly, from the very content of the promise, it is evident that Christ is speaking to more than His band of disciples there assembled, so that in the promise itself is the assurance from none other than the Church's Head that the Church will continue to the end of time. "God is in the midst of her; she shall not be moved. God shall help her, and that right early" (Ps. 46:5). "Even as He has instituted His Holy Supper for the certain assurance and confirmation of this, that also according to that nature according to which He has flesh and blood He will be with us, and dwell, work, and be efficacious in us" (*Concordia Triglotta*, p. 1043). As Christ had been with the disciples in the past, so He would be with them in the future, even though He was now taking His visible presence from them; and as Christ was with the disciples, so He will be with us. As faith relies on this promise, it sees the past as the leading of a merciful Savior and faces the future with a courage that is Christ-given. Nothing shall separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus, our Lord, who is ever present with us.

Preaching Pitfalls. — It would seem from the setting of this text, the giving of the Great Commission, that Christ takes obedience for granted. The promise might easily lull the flesh into a sense of security if the sermon fails to emphasize that reliance upon the present Christ cannot be divorced from walking in the ways which He has commanded. Christ does not go where we want Him to go according to our carnal desires. Rather we go where He leads contrary to our fleshly will and selfishness. This is always our sin, as the past plainly tells us, that we try to use God and even Christ instead of letting God and His Christ use us. But though the past abounds with our sins, the Christ with us is the Christ of the crucifixion, the Christ of the great invitation, the Christ who is our Mediator and High Priest, who pleads our cause for us. The very fact that He tells us now and at all times that He is with us means that our sins have not driven Him away, and in Him, ever graciously present, there is forgiveness. Only believe that that is why He is present.

Problem and Goal. — The problem of our people is the

same as the problem of the disciples present when this promise was spoken: facing life and tasks beyond the resources of our own abilities. Hence the care and worry of our lives, the fears and the insecurity, the flatlands of tolerable situations instead of the highlands of Christian joy. The goal therefore must be to make them aware of the presence of Christ, in which there is joy, from which we draw courage, and with which there is peace such as the world cannot give.

Outline:

CHRIST WITH US

I. The past:

- A. The Lord hath helped us hitherto.
- B. His promised presence now assures us that He forgives us our past.

II. The future:

- A. He shall be with us all the days.
- B. His grace shall be sufficient for our weakness.
- C. His purposes shall be our purposes.

WILLIAM A. BUEGE



Miscellanea

Concerning the Written Word *

MIKKEL LONO

I am impelled by an inner urge that gives me no peace to offer some comments on chapter three of Dr. T. A. Kantonen's recent book, *The Resurgence of the Gospel*. This urge received a boost when I came upon the letter by A. V. Neve entitled "Lutheranism or Pseudo-Lutheranism" in the March issue of the *Lutheran Outlook*, which clearly is inspired by Dr. Kantonen's book. We have also become aware of other evidences of the influence of this new attack upon the Written Word, and some defense should be made.

Before proceeding with a discussion of chapter three, I want to express my deep appreciation of the other chapters of "The Resurgence of the Gospel." I had the privilege to hear the original lectures, and at that time received a thrilling lift from the presentation, and the reading of the book was a no less rewarding experience. I have already read the final chapter several times, and I shall refer to the whole book again and again when struggling to put into words the fundamental truths of our faith.

The author's attack upon the Written Word in chapter three is therefore doubly disappointing. I remember how my heart sank as I listened to this presentation at Luther Seminary, and it was almost with fear that I read it now in the book—fear of the damage it may do to the message of our Lutheran Church, and fear for the consequences to the present efforts towards Lutheran unity.

According to Kantonen's concept of the Word, the Written Word is not God's Word at all. It is merely the words of men, liable to error as are all words of men, but which God uses to convey His Word directly to the heart, somewhat, I suppose, as when God uses the message of a fallible preacher as a vehicle for His life-saving Gospel. The Word of God is in the Bible, but the Written Word, or the Bible, is not the Word of God. By the Word of God Dr. Kantonen seems to mean some sort of spiritual intuition that God gives through the Bible.

At least in modern times, this concept seems first to have been presented in this form by Emil Brunner. I remember that Mr. Brunner was challenged by the faculty of Princeton Theological Seminary on this point when he was a guest there. Whether Dr. Kantonen is the first to impute this concept to Dr. Martin Luther I do not know. The new interest in Luther has entered the ranks of non-Lutherans, and I do not know what some of these may have attributed to Luther. We are all glad for the greater influence

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which this new interest promises, but I doubt the wisdom of running to non-Lutherans to learn what Luther teaches. We have not lacked competent Luther scholars in the Lutheran Church. (The authority of Dr. M. Reu in the field of Luther research cannot be dismissed as easily as Dr. Kantonen would have us believe.)

The dynamic concept of the Word of God is not new. That the Holy Spirit is in action in the Word, calling the sinner to repentance and creating the new life of Faith, is a concept that is fundamental to all our teaching and preaching. ("Ye were born again, not of corruptible seed, but incorruptible, through the Word of God." — 1 Pet. 1:2.) But that this concept is contrary to the doctrine of the inspiration of the Written Word is new to me. I have not heard anyone who thinks that the words of the Bible act like a magical formula. The Word of God, by which we have meant the Bible, is a Means of Grace, a vehicle of God's grace to man. Take away from us the authoritative Written Word and we have no Word of God. If the Written Word is not inspired and may be in error, then no man on earth can know the Truth. It is when the Written Word is discarded as authority that the sinful and deceitful heart of man perverts the Gospel to please himself. It was through a persistent and honest attention to the words of the Bible that the Gospel was recovered after it had been perverted through a neglect of that Word. If the words of the Bible, the Written Word, are not inspired, then we have no sure Word of God.

One does not have to be a Luther scholar to know that Luther did not do battle for verbal inspiration. That was not an issue at the time, and there was no reason why he should be concerned. But if what we have read of the history of the Reformation has any basis in fact at all, then Luther's conscience was bound by the written Word. I confess that I am not a Luther scholar. I have not read all his writings, and much of what I have read I have forgotten. But I have read enough to know that he clung tenaciously to the authority of the *words* of the Written Word. Otherwise the story of the conference at Marburg has no meaning. We have learned that he wrote the words, "This is my Body," on his desk before him, and that these words so bound his conscience that he could not join forces with those who would take liberties with them. This Written Word certainly was God's Word to him. Again it is recorded that at Worms he declared that unless he was convinced by clear words of Scriptures and sound reason he could not recant — his conscience was bound. And then they would have us believe that it did not concern him whether the words of the Bible might be in error or not!

We are told that since Luther likened the Written Word to the swaddling clothes containing the Christ, the Written Word must therefore be considered merely human. You can discard human swaddling clothes, lift the babe and clasp it to your bosom, but you cannot discard the Written Word without losing the Christ also. Luther was certainly right in insisting that Christ is the precious gift, but he did not say that the Means of Grace, through

and by means of which Christ is given to man, are not therefore also from God. Human words would tell us about Christ; only God's Word can give us Christ Himself. But how about Luther's seeming indifference to discrepancies in the Written Word, as indicated in quotations found in Kantonen and Neve? I do not claim to know the mind of Luther when and if he spoke as quoted. But in view of his insistence upon the absolute authority of the smallest word, I cannot accept the conclusion that he thought the Bible could be found in error. Luther's task in the Church was not that of a textual critic. He had more important work to do. I can well understand that he would refuse to be bothered by seeming discrepancies in passages that did not concern doctrines important to the Gospel. He did not say in the passages quoted that the Word might be in error, but that he would not be bothered. In our preaching of the Gospel we probably very seldom, or even never, find it necessary to try to harmonize seeming contradictions, yet that does not constitute an admission that the Bible is in error.

Now something concerning the alleged discrepancies in the Written Word. It has always been popular to seek to discredit the Written Word by pointing out contradictions in it. The method is to interpret each statement involved independently and then if these interpretations contradict each other it is claimed that the Word contradicts itself. But one of the fundamental rules of interpretation as taught in the Lutheran Church is that Scriptures should interpret Scriptures. It is easy to jump to conclusions as to the meaning of a passage, but we check our conclusions by other passages dealing with the same topic. Let me illustrate by comparing the passages in Acts 9 and 22 used by Dr. Kantonen, and after him by Rev. Neve, who finds here "glaring inaccuracies." They tell us that in Acts 9 it is recorded that Paul's companions heard the voice but saw nothing, and that in Acts 22 we read that they saw the light, but heard nothing. But the word *nothing* does not occur in either passage. That word is read into both passages. In Acts 9:7 we read: "Hearing the voice, but beholding no man" (Am. Stand.). In Acts 22 we read: "And they that were with me beheld indeed the light, but they heard not the voice of him that spake to me." It is not my purpose to try to give an interpretation that shall be accepted by everybody, only to call attention to the fact that the passages are different and do not contradict each other. There certainly is no contradiction between "seeing no one" and "beheld indeed the light." There is also no necessary contradiction between "hearing the voice" and "heard not the voice of him that spake to me." It is a reasonable explanation that in the first instance they simply heard the sound of the voice, and that in the second passage we are told that they did not hear the words of the speaker. According to my Greek dictionary, the word *phone* can mean merely a sound, or it can also mean an articulate sound. It is perfectly possible to hear a sound without hearing an articulate sound, to hear the voice of a speaker without hearing the words of the speaker. There is also a difference indicated in the fact that

in the first passage the word *voice* is in the genitive case, but in the second it is found in the accusative. It is only by trying to make the Written Word contradict itself that discrepancies are found in these passages.

This is one example of how contradictions are created, and I shall not take space to deal with the other alleged discrepancies. Even if we could not, because of our limited knowledge of the usages of language and of historical detail, harmonize all passages, we could not confidently claim errors. The late Dr. Robert Dick Wilson of Princeton Theological Seminary, one of the most learned Biblical scholars of modern times, who again and again confounded negative critics of the Bible by showing that their criticisms were based on ignorance of pertinent facts, declared that no one now is in possession of sufficient accurate information to prove a single error in the Bible.

Language seems to be a poor vehicle of thought, and I suspect that many of the arguments that have been raging concerning verbal inspiration have been due to a different understanding of what the words mean. To me they mean that the Bible, which is made up of words, is God's Word to man. I have no other Bible than this book made up of words, and if these words are not God's Words, then God has not spoken to me. I believe that spiritual intuition or any other concepts other than those clearly taught by the very words of the Bible are like shifting sand and are dangerous foundations for Christian hope.

The entering wedge for the great apostasy called modernism, which so weakened the message of Protestantism in America and all but wrecked it, was the successful attack upon the doctrine of the inspiration of the Written Word. Now that Protestantism is beginning slowly and painfully to recover from that defeat, should Lutheranism surrender its solid foundation and plunge into the sea of confusion which so nearly swallowed the rest of the Protestant Church? The truth of God's Word as taught by the Lutheran Church is not palatable to natural man, and when the authority of the Written Word is surrendered, that truth is quickly perverted so that it may be more agreeable to the natural human heart.

The Lutheran Church in America has passed through crises before, similar to the one which seems to be facing it now. In the days of *The Definite Platform* the distinctive doctrines of Our Church were threatened with extinction. But God raised up learned and zealous defenders of the truth, and the crisis was passed. It is my prayer that even now the truth may not suffer defeat by default, but that men of learning and wisdom and devotion may arise to defend our heritage.

AGAPE, *Caritas*, Charity

Communism has attacked Christianity on many fronts. One of the most dangerous points of attack is that of confusing Christian terminology or pinning responsibility on the Church where she

cannot be held responsible. Thus the Christian idea of "charity" has been attacked again and again. Maxim Gorky said some years ago: The Church "has never tried to alleviate the life of the workers by any other means than charity, which robs the worker of dignity." It is quite evident that Gorky and his fellow propagandists narrow down this term "charity" to mean merely "giving of alms," "throwing money to the poor." In attacking the weakest link in a strong chain the Communists hope to render it useless.

The Church will do well to re-examine the full scope of the word "charity," its Latin and Greek antecedents, and to put the emphasis on the primary meanings of the term. In other words, the Church must continuously teach and preach the whole meaning of "charity," all its implications, and must clearly set forth all dangers connected with a one-sided understanding. For while it is true that the idea of "charity" has been debased by non-Christians or even anti-Christians, we must at the same time readily admit that our own people, even within the Lutheran Church, who are giving so generously to alleviate the needs of their stricken fellow men, have adopted certain connotations, as, e. g., "reward," "good conscience," which are not Biblical at all if used as motivating forces, for their "charity."

What is Christian "charity"? Our English word is derived from the French *charité*, which in turn comes from Latin *caritas*, meaning "dearness, fondness, affection." This Latin word *caritas* is the most common translation in St. Jerome's Vulgate of Greek *agape*. (*Agape* is also translated *dilectio*, from which we derive English "delight.") The early versions of our English Bible translated *caritas* sometimes "love," sometimes "charity." In the King James Version *agape* was translated "charity." Luther translated it "Liebe," but since the German term was always wider than the English word "charity," this "Liebe" of Luther's Bible is usually qualified by preachers and teachers as "christliche Liebe," "Liebe Gottes," "Naechstenliebe," etc.

The primary meaning of "charity" is not "giving of alms," but — as we have seen — "dearness, fondness, affection." It is used to denote: 1. God's love to man; 2. Man's love to God; 3. Man's love to his neighbor; and 4. Christian love for our fellow men in general. In this latter sense it is also used without any specially Christian associations to indicate: natural affection. In the New Testament certain obligations were imposed upon those who accepted God's *agape* and wanted to practice *agape* on their fellow men. It was, however, not until the Middle Ages that the word *caritas* was identified — often exclusively — with the mere "giving of alms." While it is true that the popular preachers and the great mass of believers and above all, irresponsible church leaders placed an ever-greater emphasis on "almsgiving" and corrupted this beautiful Christian *agape* and abused it as a means to gain their own ends: money for the Church and a "reward in heaven" for the believer — it must also be emphasized that the best Christians from

St. Paul to Luther tried to keep *agape*, *caritas*, clean from all corruption.

Another important point is that since the early Middle Ages *caritas* was applied to works of mercy for the poor, which led to the deplorable confusion mentioned above. Chrysostom said, if there were no poor, there would be no opportunity to do good works. This was a misconception, which has narrowed down the meaning of "charity" to this day. Many unthinking people, even within our Church, apply this word only to the less fortunate and thus rob it of its deepest meaning: God's love for man, man's love for God, man's love for his neighbor regardless of his social position. We must see to it that this all-inclusive interpretation of *caritas* is preserved. There will be no real "charity" among Christians if we overemphasize one phase of it at the expense of the others. The humanist may feel a mere moral obligation towards the poor, the Christian, however, will feel a higher obligation.

What is this obligation? Negatively, the Christian will do nothing that may hurt or harm his neighbor in body or soul. Luther fought valiantly against the Roman misconception of almsgiving. He emphasized again and again that this practice was not charitable, but dangerous. Everyone who has visited Catholic countries will readily understand his anger. *Caritas* that does not rehabilitate the recipient is not "charity." In his "Vorrede" to *von der falschen Bettler Bueberei* (1528) Luther states:

Every city and village should know its poor and should register them, that they might be helped. But they shall not allow foreign or strange beggars (to beg within their walls).¹

He complains that he himself has been deceived quite often by impostors ("Ich bin selbst diese Jahr her also beschissen und versucht von falschen Landstreichern und Zungendreschern, mehr denn ich bekennen will"). If I give money to a beggar, I contribute to his delinquency. If I support a drunkard with no strings attached, I will have to answer for him. Begging thus becomes a vice. In his *Grosser Sermon vom Wucher* (1519) Luther warns:

Now there is so much begging going on that it has become an honorable profession; and not only worldlings are begging, but also priests do it on a remunerative basis (als ein koestlich Ding getrieben). . . . I think that the spiritual and secular powers would not overstep the limits of their office if they would forbid all begging (so sie alle Bettelsaecke abtaeten).²

Indiscriminate giving of alms debases the person who receives such gifts, it robs him of his feeling of responsibility, it contributes towards his indifference and causes his final downfall. Therefore in the "Ordnung eines gemeinen Kastens" (1523) Luther lays down the following ruling:

No beggars shall be allowed in our parish. . . . Everyone, excepting only the old and sick, shall either work or be expelled from our parish.³

¹ Munich Ed., V, 243.

² Munich Ed., V, 162.

³ Munich Ed., V, 61.

In a positive way, *caritas* will try to rehabilitate both spiritually and physically. Luther advocates the establishment of homes for the aged, the sick, the poor, and the orphans, and he stresses that everyone should be taught the Christian fundamentals and also to work. The great Inner Mission institutions of our Church are trying to work along these lines. But it is important that our congregations and individual Lutherans, too, see to it that their charity is channeled in the right direction.

We dare not make a distinction between friends and enemies, provided, of course, that the need for charity is real. Luther in *An die Pfarrherren, wider den Wucher zu predigen* (1540) gives an exegesis of Matt. 5:42 in which he states:

Thou shalt give to everybody; this does not mean that I must give to all people or to all those in need. He [Christ] knows that this is impossible. But He is arguing against the Jewish idea that . . . thou shalt love thy neighbor, but hate thy enemy. . . . Over against this idea Christ says: thou shalt give to everybody, not only to thy friend, but also to thy enemy. Thou shalt not exclude anybody.⁴

We must give in the right spirit. The left hand must not know what the right hand does (Matt. 6:3). Luther says (a few pages later):

Give from a simple heart, not for vainglory; and try as hard as you can to forget about it; act as if you had done nothing; or else the smell of the devil will stay with it (sonst haenget sich gar gern dran der Teufelsstank, dass man sich solcher Wohltat kitzelt, und gesehen sein will.)⁵

Do not give to be seen by others. God will see into your heart. God will reward you, but you must not expect His reward. In his *Tischreden* Luther rebuked Dr. Jonas. One day Luther and his table companions had gone downtown, and Luther had given alms to the poor. Dr. Jonas had followed his example, saying: "Who knows where God will give it back to me." Luther said: "You act as if God had not given it to you in the first place; you must give freely, for pure charity's sake, willingly!"⁶

Thus we return to our point of departure: God has given us, we give to our fellow men and show that we love Him. Charity divorced from the love of God is not charity. According to Luther, *caritas* is one great important work. It is only good in so far as God has commanded it. In *Von den guten Werken* (1520) he writes:

We ought to know first that there are not good works except those which God has commanded. . . . Accordingly we must learn how to distinguish among good works from the Commandments of God and not from appearance.⁷

Caritas must be done in faith (Rom. 14:23). Luther writes in the same treatise:

⁴ *Volksbibliothek*, Concordia Publ. House, XIII—XIV.

⁵ *Ibid.*

⁶ Munich Ed., VII, 314.

⁷ Munich Ed., II, Introduction.

If things are done with such faith that we believe that they please God, then they are praiseworthy not because of their virtue, but because of such faith, for which all works are of equal value.⁸

The world may judge us by the outward impact that our charity makes upon society, but God judges us by our faith. There may be greater blessings in little things done in faith than in big projects done for selfish and worldly considerations. This difference in motivation is felt today by many sincere Christians abroad, who have come to realize that even the most splendid efforts at charity given without faith will not relieve them and who turn towards their fellow Christians in America in the hope that Christian charity, however limited, carries with it the blessings from on High. Like everything that a Christian does for God's sake, *caritas* must fill his whole being. It is not just another department of our life, but our whole life.

God does not only *command* us to do good works, he *allows* us to do them. This permission enables us to exercise and strengthen our faith. Chemnitz mentions in his *Enchiridion* that Luther, Melancthon, Regius, and the Augustana and the Apology considered this an important function of good works.⁹

Thus we arrive at the all-inclusive interpretation which Luther took directly from the New Testament. Our whole life is *caritas*, either passive or active. We are surrounded by it, we must radiate it.

As long as there are sinners, this interpretation of *agape*, *caritas*, charity, will be watered down or challenged, sometimes for selfish reasons, sometimes simply because "the flesh is weak" and cannot adhere to the things that are acceptable in the sight of God. But the Church dare not give in. The Church can do much in these dark days, which in many ways resemble the days just before the Reformation, to help preserve the true meaning of Christian "charity." Only if we are faithful in our teaching and preaching shall we be able to meet the challenge of our adversaries. Only then shall we prevail against them.

WALTER G. TILLMANNS

⁸ *Ibid.*

⁹ Ed. by A. L. Graebner, 1886, p. 123 f.



Theological Observer

"Hamma Digest" Issue. — For some years Dean E. E. Flack has sent us copies of the *Hamma Digest Issue* of the *Wittenberg Bulletin* published by Wittenberg College, Springfield, Ohio. We were very happy to receive also this year's *Hamma Digest* with its rich variety of stimulating articles. The *Digest* contains articles on "Christian Higher Education Year" by Rees Edgar Tulloss; "Can the Lutheran Churches in America be Conditioned for Ecumenicity?" by Otto H. Bostrom; "On the Natural Knowledge of God" by Otto W. Heick; "The Focus of Evangelical Worship" by Willard D. Allbeck; "Toynbee's Analysis of History" by Cyrus M. Wallick; "Christianity and History" by George E. Mendenhall; "The Need for Reappraisal in American Education" by Henry O. Yoder; "Write a Letter, Pastor" by Amos John Traver; and "Arrows in the Bible" by E. E. Flack. In some articles one notes the zeal of a prophet, a zeal which occasionally condenses into a white heat. This may account for the overstatement made by Otto H. Bostrom, "To realize ecumenical unity in the Christian Church is the most urgent concern for Christians today" (p. 12), and Prof. Mendenhall's unfair interpretation, "In general, theology has not been founded on the experiences of history, but instead on abstract thought and reasoning from premises thought to be found in Scripture. A good example of such a foundation on abstraction is the orthodoxist premise of the inerrancy and infallibility of Scripture. The new historical knowledge made such a position impossible to any but the ignorant or intellectually dishonest. The orthodox consequently fought with bitterness, vindictiveness, and unchristian vituperation against what they conceived to be an attack on the very foundation of their faith; they were right in seeing the far-reaching implications of the new disciplines of historical research, but they were wrong in believing that the *foundation* of Christian faith is a rational premise of logic" (p. 36). Professor Mendenhall's interpretation is unfair because also for many orthodox believers the foundation of Christian faith is far more than "a rational premise of logic." There is a thing like oversimplification also in theological thinking. Apart from the above and a few other minor considerations, we owe much to all the articles in this year's *Digest*. P. M. B.

Is Catholic Doctrine Changing? — This question is under discussion in Protestant circles both here and in Europe. At Bad Boll in Germany we were informed this past summer that there appear to be straws in the wind that the Vatican is revising its position on Neo-Thomism. We have not noted such a change of sentiment in our own country. Yet it would surely be possible for Catholic authorities, with permission from Rome, to make adjustments of Thomistic principles to present-day secular forms of thought. It would even be possible for Rome, in the interest of greater and more important issues and objectives, to shelve

altogether certain Thomistic principles in so far as they deal with wholly secular affairs. But this is a far cry from saying that Rome is changing her doctrine. Rome will not change the doctrines that the Pope is God's vicegerent and Peter's successor here on earth, that he is above all councils and synods, that his word is final, and that the Roman Church is above every form of government. M. Martinez, writing in the *Christian Century* (Aug. 31, p. 1015) is right when he says, "Against this Jesuit [Fr. Dunne] stand the words of Pius IX, who in his encyclical *Longinqua Oceani* says: 'It is necessary to destroy the error of those who might believe that perhaps the status of the church in America is a desirable one, and also an error that an imitation of that sort of thing, the separation of church and state, is legal and even convenient.' These are the words of the supreme authority in the Catholic Church and whatever Fr. Dunne or anyone else might say to the contrary has no value whatever. The Catholic Church has not changed nor is it changing. But the times and the circumstances have changed and the church must adapt itself to them, at least outwardly, while waiting for *der Tag*." P. M. B.

The "Paradox" Concept in Modern Theology.—In *Religion and Life* (Autumn, 1949), Rev. Waymon Parsons contributes a review of current Protestant theology under the title "The Theological Pendulum," in which he traces the rise and development of modern liberalism and modern neo-orthodoxy. He concludes that neo-orthodoxy has swung too far away from center and has sponsored views as extreme as those against which it was a reaction. The author analyzes in particular what he believes to be extreme views in such areas as the depravity of man, Jesus and Christology, revelation and reason, freedom and authority. This is not the place to expose, on Scriptural grounds, all the errors of liberalism and neo-orthodoxy and of some of Rev. Parsons' conclusions. We are, however, calling attention to an observation made by Rev. Parsons which every Lutheran theologian may well take to heart, namely, his warning against what he calls "the wholesale use of the 'paradox' concept." Rev. Parsons writes: "It is not difficult to see that life and religion and theology produce many contradictions and baffling blind alleys. But on the whole we have been content to let a mystery remain a mystery and see some place for mystery in the total scheme of things. Now, however, there seems to be a tendency on the part of theologians to be highly pleased when any set of problems can be reduced to a paradox. It is well enough to realize that truth can often be arrived at by a dialectical process wherein we draw off an insight of value from the tension between opposites. But the contemporary fad of taking refuge in paradoxes and seeing in them a method of exalting religious truth strikes one as rather paralyzing, if it doesn't actually make an idol out of a stalemate." We shall go one step farther. The current fashion in some theological quarters to hide behind a "paradox" may be but another sinister way of granting to error

a rightful place alongside of truth. The "either-or" dialectic has its pitfalls, but the same is true of the "both-and" method. Both methods may be employed to express theological truth, but should never be used for the purpose of silencing and denying truth or of espousing and defending error.

P. M. B.

Lutheran Education.—This is the official educational journal of our Church edited by an editorial committee of the faculty of Concordia Teachers College, River Forest. Though this journal has now entered its 85th year, it shows no traces of old age. A casual look into the September issue with its timely editorials (*aktuell* in the best sense), its scholarly feature articles, its live news and notes, not to mention its invaluable music section, its crisp reviews, its pleasing make-up and eminent readability—all of it compels admiration and gratitude. Here is a journal, moreover, which methodically seizes upon every opportunity to impress upon its readers that the principles of Lutheran education are deeply anchored in the eternal principles revealed by God in Scripture. The inside cover of the journal features the passages Matt. 28:19-20, "Go ye, therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost, teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you," and Psalm 111:10, "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom; a good understanding have all they that do His commandments," and the quotation from Luther, "Nothing will serve us and future generations better than maintaining good schools and training the youth." In keeping with the true and profound sentiments expressed in the above passages, the editorials in *Lutheran Education* time and again single out and apply relevant Biblical truths to the teaching process. One might expect this. What one does not expect is that wherever one happens to rest his eye-intake while paging through this journal, one discovers the warm pulse beat of a Christian heart which has contributed the item or article. Considering the superior materials offered in this journal, its breadth and depth of educational insight into the vast and complex business of education, especially that of our Church, considering also the blessings which have come to our Church through this journal these many years, one can't help wishing *Lutheran Education* and its pilots another *bon voyage* as it courageously moves forward into the uncharted sea of its 85th year. May its old friends pledge it renewed loyalty. May it find many new friends. Above all, may its philosophy of education penetrate into every nook and corner of the Lutheran Church throughout the world.

P. M. B.

Prof. H. Sasse on Baptism.—Prof. P. H. Buehring has rendered the Lutheran Church of our country a distinct service by publishing in *The Lutheran Outlook* (September) his English translation of Prof. H. Sasse's recent article on Baptism. The value of Professor Sasse's article lies in this that, on the one hand, he stresses the theological rather than the historical issues involved

in infant Baptism, and, on the other hand, presents the Lutheran doctrine of infant Baptism against the larger canvas of the doctrine of Baptism in general. One cannot deal with infant Baptism without entering in on the Lutheran doctrine of the Word and faith in the Sacraments. At the same time, Professor Sasse clearly indicates at which points the Lutheran doctrine of Baptism differs from that of the Roman and the Reformed churches. From his concluding remarks we cull the following important observation: "The question [infant vs. adult baptism] cuts no figure either in the New Testament or in Luther. Aside from the fact that adult candidates for baptism voice their assent and confess their faith personally, Baptism has always been administered in the Church 'just as though' the persons to be baptized themselves desire Baptism and believe that which is spoken in the Baptismal confession of faith. This practice must not be accounted for on the basis of liturgical traditionalism and ecclesiastical conservatism, but it belongs to the very essence of the rite. We baptize infants 'just as though' they were adults, even as we adults believe 'just as though' we were infants. Whatever the difference between adults and infants may signify for us humans and for our estimate of a man, for God it signifies nothing. A human being is a human being, is a child of Adam or a child of God, without regard to his age. That is the deeper reason why all baptismal rituals treat the infant 'just as though' it were grown up."

P. M. B.

The Doctrine of Biblical Inspiration. — Ever since Rev. A. V. Neve published, in the December, 1948, issue of the *Lutheran Outlook*, an article entitled "Distinctive Characteristics of Lutheran Theology," in which he denied the doctrine of Biblical inspiration as defended, for example, in Dr. F. Pieper's *Christliche Dogmatik*, a controversy has been carried on in that periodical on the question "Is the Written Word of God, the Bible, Inspired?" In the July, 1949, issue the *Outlook* published two articles *pro*, one by J. A. Dell, "The Doctrine of the Word," and another by E. H. Parsons, "Bible Reliability," and one *con* in the September, 1949, issue, by Rev. A. V. Neve "The Doctrine of the Word" (a reply). Another article *pro* appeared in the May, 1949, issue by the Rev. Mikkel Lono, which, as Dr. Dell suggests, might have been called "Answer to Rev. Neve."* Two recent books on the subject that do not represent the traditional doctrine of the Church are: *The Resurgence of the Gospel*, by Dr. T. Kantonen, and *The Doctrine of the Word*, by Joseph Sittler, Jr.

In the meanwhile the July, 1949, issue of *Der Lutheraner*, published by our brethren in Germany, offers an enlightening and, we may add, encouraging article under the heading "*Verbalinspiration wieder aktuell?*" Translated into English, the article reads:

"By Verbal Inspiration we mean that position toward Holy Scripture which avows that the Bible is God's inerrant Word and

* This article is reprinted in the current issue of this magazine.

that not only its general content, but also all that it contains, even the individual words, is the gift of the Spirit of God and the revelation of divine truth. This position rests upon the Bible's own testimony concerning itself (2 Pet. 1:21; 2 Tim. 3:16; 1 Cor. 2:13; etc.) and corresponds to the unanimous witness of the Church from the beginning, as also to that of the fathers of the Reformation.

"Now, the confession of the infallible truth of Scripture has been so severely attacked in the German theology of the past century up to the immediate present that an attitude toward Scripture, as expressed by the term *Verbal Inspiration*, had to be regarded as absolutely impossible, that confessors of the truth who otherwise were sincere were ashamed of it, and that it [the term] was radically banned under all conditions from theological and ecclesiastical publications (*Oeffentlichkeit*).

"For this reason it might be considered as a noteworthy sign of reconsideration (*der Besinnung*) in some circles also of the Lutheran Church of our country that not only the matter, but also the word is used and discussed once more, perhaps as a possibility. Thus, according to a report submitted to us, Dr. Hans Asmussen, formerly president of the administrative board of the EKID, and now elected into the General Brotherhood Council (*Landesbruderrat*) of the Confessing Church of Schleswig-Holstein, at the 96th Lutheran Conference at Flensburg, read an essay on the doctrine of verbal inspiration, in which he declared that it is an indisputable fact that Holy Scripture is God's inerrant Word. The discussion that followed centered in the question whether it was right to give up the doctrine of verbal inspiration in view of the fact that there is nothing that can be put in its place.

"The same question in a similar form was recently propounded by Dr. Erich Stange in the first issue of the *Pastoralblaetter*, newly published by him, in connection with a discussion of the results of the church conference of the Missouri Synod at Bad Boll.

"Again, the Alsatian Dr. Suess, who has been called to the Ev. Luth. Faculty in Paris, expressed himself, in an essay on 'My View of Lutheran Existence Today,' as follows: . . . 'As the whole Person of Jesus of Nazareth, without any qualification, is the Christ, so also the whole Bible, even where it has no form or comeliness, is the Word of God. For this reason it is incomprehensible to me how people could conceive the idea of denying Verbal Inspiration. So the Holy Ghost, with ingenious magnanimity (*in genialischer Grosszuegigkeit*), did not regard words and letters as petty matters, but He was faithful even in the least things. . . .'

"We are not inclined to evaluate these first cautious attempts to elaborate a new attitude toward Scripture, as they are made, now here and now there, as an already incipient change to lay a new foundation. But we gladly take notice of the fact that the opposition of theology in the past against the reliability of the foundation, on which it itself rests, is now being felt here and there as a contradiction which must be overcome." J. T. M.

The Problem of Love.—In the *Anglican Theological Review* of July, 1949, William G. Shepherd of Saginaw, Mich., suggests that St. Paul distorted Christ's concept of love by "closing off the real capacity for love" by his doctrine of the flesh. The author assumes that the body and mind, psyche and soma, interact, that "the child is born loving," and that this love permeates the entire body. Jesus, he says, taught the unified form of love. But St. Paul regarded the body as evil, taught "an old and recognized morality of compulsion."

The result is this curious judgment:

Who can sing out with zest for life, the thrill of living and loving, when there have been bred into his bones the words, "If ye live after the flesh, ye shall die; but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live"?

The author concludes:

These facts point to one conclusion: we must take exception to St. Paul. We must look beyond Paul to Jesus for the law we teach, and forsake a Pauline ministry which helps make people unable — physically, emotionally and intellectually — to love.

The author seems to have overlooked, on the one hand, sayings of Jesus like Matt. 15:19 or John 3:6; and on the other hand, sayings of St. Paul like Phil. 4:8-9. St. Paul cannot be set in opposition to the Lord in this matter.

The solution to Mr. Shepherd's problem does not lie in repudiating his concept of the unity of body and spirit. The Word of God does indeed think of them together throughout; Gen. 2:7; 1 Thess. 5:23; 1 Corinthians 15.

The great need in this area of thought is rather a correct understanding of "flesh." St. Paul does not think of the evils within his body or flesh as due to the nature of the body, but due to the lack of the presence of God. When he calls the body "dead," he means at the same time the entrance of the life by which the body, in this world and the world to come, actually functions with God; Romans 6; Colossians 3; Ephesians 5. Mr. Shepherd could hardly say that St. Paul sanctions "a loveless mating" if he had read Ephesians 5.

R. R. C.

Items from *Religious News Service*

Total membership of all religious bodies in the United States at the end of 1948 was 79,576,352 — or 53.3 per cent of the population — according to the annual church statistics report of the *Christian Herald*. The religious population of the United States is "about 60 per cent Protestant, 33 per cent Roman Catholic, 6 per cent Jewish, and 1 per cent divided among such groups as Russian and Greek Orthodox, Spiritualist, Buddhist, and others." It listed 47,557,203 persons as members of 222 Protestant denominations,

a gain of 1,407,527 over the previous year. The Roman Catholic total was given as 26,075,697, as reported in the 1948 *Catholic Directory*, a gain of 807,524.

The Schaff-Herzog *Encyclopedia of Religious Knowledge* is being reissued by the Baker Book House of Grand Rapids. Dr. Lef-ferts A. Loetscher, associate professor of church history at Princeton Theological Seminary, will serve as editor in chief with a staff of recognized theologians. The modernizing program will include two supplementary volumes featuring new theological thought and information on topics of the original set, plus new articles of recent origin and interest and biographies of contemporary theologians and religious leaders.

A dictionary of the Navajo language—fruit of nearly fifty years' work by a Franciscan priest—is nearing completion at St. Michaels, Ariz. Navajo stem vocabulary is a 600-page English and Navajo creation of Fr. Berard Haile, O. F. M., of Canton, Ohio, and Chattanooga, Tenn., who has been at work on the project since entering the Navajo mission in 1900.

Ancient Hebrew manuscripts dating back to the First Century B. C., which were accidentally discovered in Palestine early last year, will be published in photographic form this fall with suitable transcriptions under the auspices of the American School of Oriental Research at Yale University. The manuscripts include a commentary on the book of Habakkuk and the oldest known copy of the book of Isaiah, the most ancient complete Biblical document ever found.

One hundred years of Moravian mission work in Nicaragua were celebrated by the denominations last month. Celebrations were held in the three centers of Moravian work—Bilwaskarma, where the mission hospital and a native training institute are located, Puerto Cabezas, and Bluefields, where secondary educational work is centered.

Bishop Ivan Lee Holt of St. Louis, president of the Council of Bishops of the Methodist Church, recently attended a meeting in northwest Germany at which Roman Catholic and Protestant clergymen prayed together. Speaking to a gathering at the Methodist assembly grounds in Lake Junaluska, North Carolina, Bishop Holt said the German meeting was attended by twelve Roman Catholic and twelve Protestant clergymen who "not only talked, but read the Scriptures and prayed together."

The Supreme Sacred Congregation of the Holy Office in Rome has issued a ruling permitting priests to perform marriage ceremonies under certain conditions for Catholics who marry Communists. According to the ruling, the ceremony may not be performed in a church without the bishop's permission or a Mass celebrated, but it may take place in a sacristy or a parochial residence.

Book Review

All books reviewed in this periodical may be procured from or through Concordia Publishing House, 3558 S. Jefferson Ave., St. Louis 18, Mo.

The Faith of the Christian Church. By Gustaf Aulén. Translated by Eric Wahlstrom and G. Everett Arden. Muhlenberg Press, Philadelphia. 457 pages, 9½×6½. \$5.00.

The Muhlenberg Press deserves praise for publishing in so excellent a form, from its fourth and greatly revised Swedish edition, Bishop Aulén's well-known book *Den allmaenneliga kristna tron* (Der allgemeine christliche Glaube). Not only the general make-up of the book, but also the translation of the author's not too simple Swedish merits high praise, for only rarely is the reader reminded of the fact that he is not dealing with an original. Then, too, the publishers are to be commended for having given to the Christian reading public a book which, over against the overwhelming Barthian-Reformed literature, follows the Lutheran pattern and is the result of the diligent Luther research carried on in Sweden for many years, especially by the "Lundensian School." Dr. Aulén is Bishop of Straengnaes and has become widely known in Europe and America by his work *Christus Victor*. With Dr. Anders Nygren, who recently was created Bishop of Lund, and several other Swedish theologians he established the "Lundensian School of Theology," of which his present work may be said to be an expression and interpretation. Bishop Aulén is a leader in the ecumenical movement and as such has shared in the conferences of Stockholm (1925), Lausanne (1927), Oxford and Edinburgh (1937). He also was one of the founders of the Lutheran World Federation at Lund (1947) and played a leading role in the first assembly of the World Council of Churches at Amsterdam (1948). The reader may keep in mind this ecclesiastical background of the author for properly evaluating his dogmatical work, which is neither Fundamentalist nor Modernist, neither Barthian nor orthodoxly Lutheran, but represents a "purely scientific theology" that purports to offer "a new and deeper insight into the meaning and motif of the Reformation" and to supply "a new, fresh, and realistic approach to the biblical message" (cf. Aulén's Preface). Aulén's Dogmatics is divided into four parts: I. Faith and Theology, in which the theological *prolegomena* are discussed; II. The Living God; III. The Act of God in Christ; IV. The Church of God. There are, of course, subdivisions. Thus in Part II the author considers A. The Christian Conception of God; and B. The God of Action, that is, God as Savior, Judge, Creator, etc.; Part III treats A. The Victorious Act of Reconciliation; B. The Broken and Restored Relationship with God, in other words, Redemption, Justification, and Sanctification. Part IV is divided into the following subparts: A. The Nature of the Christian Church; B. The Constitutive Factors of the Church (Means of Grace, Sacraments, Prayer, Christian Ministry); C. The Church in the Present Age (Church Membership, Church and State, Christian Unity); D. The Church from the Viewpoint of Eschatology (the Living and the Dead, *Regnum Gloriae*; there is no chapter on the eternal damnation of the wicked). This novel arrangement of the "heads" of Dogmatics is in itself satisfactory and could be well used to

accommodate all doctrines of the Christian faith; unfortunately, however, some essential doctrines are not treated at all, while others are set forth inadequately. In addition, the author's theology is by no means *Schrifttheologie*, as Missouri Synod theologians have learned to evaluate it under the leadership of Walther, Pieper, A. L. Graebner, and other Lutheran church teachers. According to Aulén the function of systematic theology is not to set forth the doctrines of Holy Scripture under proper heads, with their proper antitheses (he deprecates a "loci theology"), but it is "purely scientific, in so far as its task is to clarify the significance of the Christian faith. It can serve the Christian life only by performing this scientific study without any secondary purposes" (p. 4). This scientific orientation of systematic theology in the final analysis undermines the practical relation of doctrinal theology to the life and work of the Christian in general and of the Christian minister in particular. Doctrinal theology thus ceases to be a *habitus practicus* and becomes a *habitus demonstrativus*, since it has for its purpose no more than "to make clear the meaning and significance of the Christian faith" (p. 5). "This purpose," Aulén argues, "would be distorted and limited if systematic theology were to start from and allow itself to be bound by a denominational or confessional conception of faith given once and for all" (p. 16). Aulén, then, does not believe in a fixed theological truth. He writes: "Systematic theology cannot assume as self-evident that a certain confession in every respect represents that which is perfect and genuinely Christian" (*ibid.*). Aulén thus favors doctrinal progress. But just as he does not wish to have systematic theology limited to any confession, so also he does not consider it to be bound to the revelation which in Holy Scripture has been made in Christ. He writes: "Revelation is fulfilled in Christ, but at the same time is continually in progress" (p. 44). Again: "This conception of divine revelation is the opposite of that which is static and which limits it to certain isolated events, or localizes it in a portion of past history. . . . Nothing is more essential to faith than that God continually manifests and reveals Himself" (p. 45). Or: "When revelation is understood as finished at a certain point of time, a deistic conception is introduced which is foreign to faith" (*ibid.*). A doctrinal theology, so conceived and developed, cannot be a theology fully in accord with Scripture and the Lutheran Confessions. It misses the definiteness, stability, and Scripturalness of a theology that is genuinely Biblical. Nor can it be rightly oriented to Scripture as its only *principium cognoscendi*. Aulén does not accept the Lutheran principle of the *Schriftprinzip*. To him the doctrine of verbal inspiration (and for all that, of all inspiration), which he regards as a mere theory, means a "mechanical objectivizing" of the Word (p. 365). "This mechanical objectivizing," he says, "is contrary to the actual attitude of faith and to the real character of the Word" (*ibid.*). To Aulén the Bible is a "collection of historical documents of religion," to which he adds: "But in the midst of all this human and incidental in these religious documents of man, faith discerns the divine voice, the Word of God, speaking with unconditional and inescapable authority directly from God to man. The Word of God comes in the 'form of humiliation.' These conditions under which the Word of God exists cannot be improved or overcome

by any kind of theories of inspiration or by arguments that are designed to protect the Bible from its 'humanity.' Faith always discovers the revelation of God in 'secret,' in the human covering that hides it" (*ibid.*). — The orientation of Aulén's theology becomes apparent especially in his treatment of the doctrine of the means of grace. He reproves "scholastic theology," which "confined the Word as a means of grace to the Bible and conceived of this Word almost as a divine record or protocol" (p. 369). Against this scholasticism he argues from Article IV (Part III) of the Smalcald Articles that Luther did not, as did the later orthodox Lutheran scholastics, limit the Word simply to the Bible, but strongly emphasized also the spoken and living Word, the Word as proclaimed, as a means of grace, and besides he added to the other means of grace (mentioned in Article IV) the "mutual conversation and consolation of brethren, or . . . 'the word of conversation'" (p. 355). Aulén evidently means to support his departure from Scripture as the sole source and rule of faith by words of Luther, which, however, he either misunderstands or misinterprets. Manifestly he conceives of a "Word of God" outside and beyond Scripture, which Luther never did. When Luther speaks of the "spoken Word of God," he means Holy Scripture, declared to hearers either in a sermon or in any other instructive discourse. For Luther the spoken Word of God is never different from the written Word. Again, when Luther speaks of the "mutual conversation and consolation of brethren," he does not think of any Word of God essentially different from that set forth in Scripture, but merely of the divine Word of Scripture, as it is employed by Christian laymen; for in Article IV of the Smalcald Articles he inveighs not only against the enthusiastic immediacy of the Spirit's operation, but also against the *ex opere operato* theory of Rome. — Aulén's presentation of the doctrine of the Lord's Supper is so lacking in clarity that often it becomes difficult for the reader to follow him. He certainly does not correctly represent Luther's doctrine of the real presence. When Luther argued the Real Presence, he meant to preserve the simple meaning of Christ's words of institution, namely, that with the bread and wine the communicant receives, in a supernatural, incomprehensible manner, Christ's true body and blood, and not, as Aulén's presentation puts it, "Luther wanted to maintain that the Lord's Supper is a gift, a means of grace" (p. 395). Christ's true body and blood was to Luther the *materia coelestis* of Holy Communion and not, as Aulén avers, "the concept of the heavenly and transfigured body of Christ," which really has nothing to do with the Real Presence, as Luther pointed out time and again. — How badly a theology fares that is not rooted in Scripture is evident from Aulén's treatment of Infant Baptism. He writes: "If the value of baptism is inseparably connected with an ability on our part to discover some faith in the child, it cannot be said that its value rests on any sure foundation. In reality this discussion of 'faith' in the little child obscured entirely that which to Christian faith is the very heart of the matter, viz., that infant baptism is the act of election by divine love through which the baptized person receives and is assured of his right to membership in the church" (p. 385). This presentation of Infant Baptism is so altogether at variance with our Lutheran faith that it requires no special refu-

tation. It is impossible, of course, in even a lengthy review to bring to the attention of the reader every departure from Scripture found in a Dogmatics. But the reader may consider the following guidelines if he should study Aulén's new book, which no doubt will be studied widely also in America: 1. While Aulén's Dogmatics contains many correct statements, it is not directly based upon Scripture; 2. It definitely rejects the *Schriftprinzip*; 3. Its treatment of such essential heads as Bibliology, Theology Proper, Christology, Eschatology, and others is regrettably inadequate; 4. Its presentation of doctrine is on the whole very obscure, and often the reader will find it hard to understand what the author means; 5. It does not consistently set forth the theology of the Lutheran Confessions; 6. It does not practically prepare the theological student for his work as pastor and teacher of God's Word; 7. Lacking the conservative note, it is not a safe dogmatical guide for Lutheran seminarians who desire to know the pure and full Scripture truth; 8. Rejecting Scripture as the sole source and norm of faith, Aulén's Dogmatics, just as Barth's, ultimately loses itself in subjective speculation; 9. It is subjective, for it considers the function of Systematic Theology to find the "genuinely Christian" in ecumenical theology.

JOHN THEODORE MUELLER

The Reinterpretation of Luther. By Edgar M. Carlson. Muhlenberg Press, Philadelphia. 256 pages, 8¼×5½. \$3.50.

Among the theological books published by Lutherans in America in recent years, this new volume no doubt deserves major emphasis. Its author, a graduate of Augustana Theological Seminary and of the University of Chicago, from which he received his Ph. D. in historical theology in 1944, is now president of Gustavus Adolphus College and president of the Synodical Luther League Council of the Augustana Lutheran Church. His thesis chiefly concerns the evaluation of the interpretation of Luther by Swedish scholars such as Aulén, Billing, Bohlin, Soederblom, Nygren, and others. He traces the remarkable influence of Luther upon Swedish thought and life, presents the new approach to Luther in method, and as to focus of attention occupies himself at greater length with the analysis of Luther's theology as interpreted by Swedish divines, especially by those of the Lund school, points out Luther's relation to Medievalism and Lutheran orthodoxy, tests the validity of the Swedish interpretation of Luther, and finally shows the value of the Swedish Luther interpretation for American Lutheranism in particular, for general American Protestant theology in general, and especially for the modern ecumenical mind. In relatively plain and intelligible language the book offers much important historico-theological material, which at present is very much under discussion and perhaps also in debate. For students wishing to acquaint themselves with the modern Luther research work done in Sweden, Carlson's presentation of the subject is almost a *necessarium*. Nowhere else perhaps are the issues discussed so plainly and objectively as here; and nowhere else perhaps by an American scholar better informed on the subject than is the author. We heartily recommend this new, profound study to all who are interested in this special phase of theology. The book, however, requires careful and judicious study, and the student is apt to place not a few question marks on the margin with regard to single state-

ments, governing principles, and entire evaluation complexes. To select only a few instances. The author states, for example, that according to Aulén it is virtually meaningless to distinguish between "Christ for us" and "Christ in us," since what Christ does in us is precisely what He has done for us (p. 75). But ultimately that means to ignore the difference between justification and sanctification. Swedish scholars, moreover, find it baffling that Luther at times speaks as though "the whole Christ" were present in the Lord's Supper and then again as though only His "body and blood" were present (p. 138). As a matter of fact, this is not perplexing at all, since Luther emphasized both the spiritual eating and drinking in the Holy Supper, that is, the embracing of the whole Christ and His merits by faith, and the sacramental eating and drinking, or the oral eating and drinking of Christ's body and blood with the sacramental elements. Luther also here speaks Scripturally and not after the fashion of medieval scholasticism. Furthermore, the supposed difference between Luther and the later Lutheran theologians on the question of the inerrant, inspired Scriptures (p. 158) does not exist; for not only Quenstedt or Calov or Chemnitz, but also Luther believed that the canonical books of the Holy Scriptures are God's inspired, infallible Word, and he said so in scores of places. Then, too, there is in reality no difference between Luther and the later dogmatists on the doctrine of the atonement (p. 159f.), as some of the Swedish divines seem to think. In fact, our Lutheran dogmatists consistently go back to Scripture and Luther to support their teachings on the atonement. Moreover, it cannot be denied that Luther in his theological *Werdegang* was largely influenced toward his theological thinking by the masters whose books he treasured. But when Luther preached God's holiness and righteousness and His grace and love, in other words, the Law and the Gospel, he stood entirely on Scriptural ground. These, however, are only a few of the many cautions which the reviewer would address to those who take up this book for study. While he deeply appreciates the fine Luther research work done in Sweden and elsewhere during the last decades, there is greatly needed in our own Church a personal Luther research, a diligent study of Luther's writings, in which he himself pleads his cause and presents his doctrine. Let the reader carefully study this new book; and may it lead him not to blind acceptance of the *ipse dixit* of any scholar, but to a renewed interest in the perusal of Luther's works to discover for himself what the great Reformer taught. The great Swedish scholars certainly put us to shame inasmuch as they studied Luther, while we in America neglected the great man whose theology we so highly prize.

JOHN THEODORE MUELLER

American Freedom and Catholic Power. By Paul Blanshard. The Beacon Press, Boston. 1949. 350 pages, 5½×8¼. \$3.50.

The early working title of this book, "The Social Policies of the Roman Catholic Church," indicates the limitations which the author had set for himself. The purpose of the book is to set forth the dangers of Rome's political, cultural, and economic policies for the democratic principles to which the vast majority of Americans subscribe. In 13 chapters the author brings conclusive evidence that Rome, i. e., the American hierarchy, is determined to regulate the behavior of as many people as possible according

to its moral standards. The author shows how the hierarchy attempts to foist its views on the American public, particularly in the areas of education, publications, medicine, marriage and divorce, politics, science and scholarship, capital and labor. The Church presumes to speak with absolute authority in all these areas and determines what the doctor, the legislator, the workman, the industrialist must or must not do under a given circumstance. The facts which the author marshals forth give the reader an opportunity to look behind the scenes and to see at first glance how the hierarchy works to shape American thinking. More important, the reader will gain an understanding of the "whys" and "wherefores" of Roman practices—to mention only one example, why the Catholic doctor must save the fetus if he is confronted by a choice between saving the life of the mother and her unborn child. In his book the author brings together in one volume factual material which could be acquired only by years of reading and research. And all his statements are carefully documented and, what is equally important, are highly relevant. He has succeeded in showing that in the Roman Church America is confronted by "the use and abuse of power by an organization that is not only a church, but a state within the state, and a state above the state" (p. 4). The Roman Catholic press has taken due cognizance of this book, and in the Jesuit weekly, *America*, one of the most liberal Jesuits, Geo. Dunne, has attempted in several review articles to refute Blanshard's book, though in our opinion most of the blows were a considerable distance below the proverbial belt.

No doubt, many of our laity will read this book, and it should be pointed out to them that the author is oriented in liberal theology. For this reason he rejects every form of religious authoritarianism, for example, he objects to the Catholic parochial school (and by the same token to the Lutheran parish school) on the ground that the child's mind is molded into a fixed pattern, something which is contrary to his interpretation of the liberal spirit. He views the clash between Rome and Protestantism primarily as the tension between medieval darkness and modern enlightenment. Rome's theology and practice, however, make sense only in the light of its basic assumption, viz., that it, and it alone, is the Church to which Christ gave all authority. All other attacks on Rome are shadowboxing. This is quite evident in the recent attacks by leading Protestants, particularly in the article by Dean Bowie and the answer by the Jesuit Murray in the September issue of *American Mercury* (see the synopsis in *Time*, Sept. 12, 1949), where the Jesuit in our opinion had the better of the argument. One must attack Rome at its jugular vein, the arrogant and presumptive claim that the Pope as "vicar of Christ" is the final source for the answers to all religious, moral, scientific, economic, and political questions. In the light of this authoritarian theory Rome is driven by an inner necessity to make a totalitarian demand on all its subjects—and that includes all properly baptized people! As long as Rome's claim stands that there is only one Church, the Holy Catholic Roman Church, she will insist on the absolute rule of the clergy, on the submission of the laity, on the regimentation of its children, on the condemnation of the public schools, on intolerance of all non-Roman churches, on the

right to determine legislation, etc., in short, on its claim to control the behavior of all from the cradle to the grave. Rome is and remains a menace to the Christian Church and to the State because of this basic premise.

F. E. MAYER

Handbook to the Mennonite Hymnary. By Lester Hostetler. Publisher: The Board of Publications of the Mennonite Church of North America, Newton, Kans. 425 pages. \$3.00. Order from Concordia Publishing House, St. Louis 18, Mo.

The author of this very fine *Handbook* is the Rev. Lester Hostetler, minister of Bethel College Church, North Newton, Kans. The Rev. Hostetler is a member of the Hymn Society of America and served as co-editor of *The Mennonite Hymnary*.

In the Introduction of this volume the author outlines quite satisfactorily the history of Christian hymnody. Beginning with an attempt to define what a true hymn is, he passes over to the beginning of Christian song, then takes up the hymns of the Eastern Church, Greek and Syriac, the hymns of the Western Church in Latin, the hymns of the Bohemian Brethren, then the hymns of the Reformation, and then the English hymnody, beginning with the metrical Psalms and running through to the hymnody of the American churches.

In the section entitled "Mennonite Hymnody" the author states: "Mennonites have made many contributions to society through their religious life and practices, but we have produced no important hymnody of our own. Throughout the four hundred years of our existence as a church, we have been a singing people, in times of persecution as well as in times of peace. Great emphasis has always been laid upon the importance of congregational singing in our worship services. Since the beginning of the nineteenth century the Mennonites of various branches in America alone have published over fifty hymn books. But an examination of these hymn books shows that we are heavily indebted to others. Instead of producing original hymns and tunes, we have borrowed, with minor exceptions, our entire repertory from other denominations. The wealth of verse and music produced by German and English writers throughout the century has been found to serve our needs adequately and well."

The body of the *Handbook* is divided into six books, the first giving the notes on words and music of the hymn section, which includes 402 hymns; the second a section on hymns for children, 33 in all; a third Gospel songs, 67 in all; a fourth the church year in *chorales*, 67 in all; a fifth metrical Psalms, 25 in all; and the last 22 pages are given over to Responses, etc. There is a very substantial bibliography.

Of the total of hymns and Psalms, namely, six hundred, 98 are translations: 82 from the German, three from the Greek, one from the Italian, eleven from the Latin, and one from the Welsh. While the 82 translations from the German contain many of the great German *chorales*, it is very evident that the Mennonites, in making their transition from German to English, are not taking along a goodly portion of the rich treasury of German hymnody. For this reason also the *Handbook* is not much different from other handbooks of other denominations, which lean heavily on the English and American hymns. If our recollection is right,

the German hymnody of the Mennonites, although somewhat subjective, nevertheless was very strong in its emphasis on the German chorale. The English hymnary of this branch of the Mennonite Church does not lean strongly toward the German chorale. If other groups that have their antecedents in Germany follow the same trend that the Mennonites are following, it will mean that ultimately most of the treasures of German hymnody will be lost to the American church.

W. G. POLACK

The Radiant Cross. By Paul S. Rees, D. D. Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., Grand Rapids 3, Mich., 1949. 134 pages, 5½×8. \$2.00.

It is heartening indeed to find a collection of sermons that is evangelical in character from cover to cover. In addition, the sermons of Dr. Rees are interesting as well as inspiring. The illustrations chosen throughout are pertinent as well as thought-provoking. Here and there our pastors will want to change an expression and drop a thought, but they will find much food for thought in these sermons, not a few of which are excellent also from a rhetorical and homiletic point of view. We regret that several excellent opportunities to refer to the Sacraments were ignored.

WALTER E. BUSZIN

BOOKS RECEIVED

From Concordia Publishing House, St. Louis, Mo.:

Concordia Bible Teacher. Vol. XI, No. 1. \$1.00 per annum.

Concordia Bible Student. Vol. XXXIX, No. 1. 65 cents per annum.

Edited by Rev. J. M. Weidenschilling, S. T. D., under the auspices of the Board for Parish Education, The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod. "The Church Through the Ages" (A Brief History of the Church). October—December, 1949.

1949 Vacation Bible School Material. Workshop.

God's Little Children (Beginner Dept.), 36 cents, net. *Living as God's Children* (Primary Dept.), 44 cents, net. *Walking with God* (Junior Dept.), 44 cents, net. *In God's Pathway* (Senior Dept.), 44 cents, net. *Teacher's Manual*, 65 cents, net. Handicraft Projects: Beginner, 27 cents, net. Primary, 27 cents, net. Junior, 27 cents, net. Senior, 27 cents, net. *Teacher's Manual*, 65 cents, net.

Portals of Prayer. No. 93. "Show Me Thy Way." Daily devotions from September 19 to November 9, 1949. By Rev. Martin Walker, Buffalo, New York. 10 cents each.

Andachtsbuechlein. Nr. 93. "Das Heilige Vaterunser." Daily devotions from September 19 to November 9, 1949. By Rev. Paul Sauer, Oak Park, Illinois. 10 cents each.

From Follett Publishing Company, Chicago, Ill.:

The Classic Greek Dictionary. 11th printing. 1,098 pages, 6×8. 73,400 entries, thumb-indexed. \$5.00.

The Classic Latin Dictionary. 12th printing. 933 pages. 51,300 entries, plain. \$3.00.